

Weekly Compilation of
**Presidential
Documents**



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Editor's Note: The Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents is also available on the Internet on the *GPO Access* service on <http://www.gpo.gov/nara/nara003.html>.

WEEKLY COMPILATION OF PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS

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Week Ending Friday, February 11, 2000

**Message to the Senate Transmitting
the Egypt-United States Mutual
Legal Assistance in Criminal
Matters Treaty With Documentation**

February 2, 2000

To the Senate of the United States:

With a view to receiving the advice and consent of the Senate to ratification, I transmit herewith the Treaty Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters, signed at Cairo on May 3, 1998. I transmit also a related exchange of diplomatic notes for the information of the Senate. The report of the Department of State with respect to the Treaty is enclosed.

The Treaty is one of a series of modern mutual legal assistance treaties being negotiated by the United States in order to counter criminal activities more effectively. The Treaty should be an effective tool to assist in the prosecution of a wide variety of crimes, including terrorism and drug-trafficking offenses. The Treaty is self-executing.

The Treaty provides for a broad range of cooperation in criminal matters. Mutual assistance available under the Treaty includes taking the testimony or statements of persons; providing documents, records and items of evidence; locating or identifying persons or items; serving documents; transferring persons in custody for testimony or other purposes; executing requests for searches and seizures; assisting in proceedings related to immobilization and forfeiture of assets, restitution, and collection of fines; and any other form of assistance not prohibited by the laws of the Requested State.

I recommend that the Senate give early and favorable consideration to the Treaty and give its advice and consent to ratification.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
February 2, 2000.

NOTE: This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

The President's Radio Address

February 5, 2000

Good morning. Today I want to talk about what we can and must do to help more women get the lifesaving treatment they need to fight breast and cervical cancer. More than 180,000 American women will be diagnosed with these diseases this year. Each of us has a sister, a daughter, a friend, or in my case, a mother, who has struggled against them.

These cancers can be treated and cured—if we catch them early and fight them aggressively. But more than 40,000 women will die from breast and cervical cancer this year. Many are women whose cancer was detected or treated too late because they had no health insurance and no hope of paying for treatment.

In fact, older women with breast cancer are 40 percent more likely to die from the disease if they're uninsured. With strong leadership from the First Lady, we've worked hard over the past 7 years to increase free and low-cost cancer screenings and to help women catch these diseases in time.

We've expanded the National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program to serve hundreds of thousands of women a year in all 50 States. And Vice President Gore has

led us to make a dramatic increase in our commitment to cancer research and treatment. But still, it's true that every year, thousands of women are told they have cancer and must cope without insurance.

This is especially troubling, given the stunning progress scientists are making in the fight against cancer. Researchers now can identify genes that predict several kinds of cancers. They're experimenting with therapies that will shut down defective genes so they can never multiply and grow. New drugs and new combinations of drugs will bring hope to those whose cancer has spread, or who suffer from the side effects of chemotherapy.

These breakthroughs will make a big difference for some of our most prevalent cancers, like breast cancer, which strikes one in eight American women over a lifetime. But these lifesaving new therapies can only help if patients have insurance or other resources that enable them to afford state-of-the-art treatment or any treatment at all.

At a time when we know more about cancer than ever and can fight it better than ever, we must not leave women to face cancer alone. That's why today I'm announcing a proposal to help States eliminate the barriers low income women face to getting treatment for breast or cervical cancer. The budget I'm sending to Congress on Monday will allow States to provide full Medicaid benefits to uninsured women whose cancers are detected through federally funded screening programs. Too often, uninsured women face a patchwork of care, inadequate care, or no care at all. Many are denied newer, better forms of treatment or wait months to see a doctor.

Judy Lewis was one of the lucky ones. When a screening program detected her breast cancer, she had no health insurance and no money to spare. Fortunately, she found doctors who would treat her. And 17 months later, she's cancer-free. But she and her husband are also \$28,000 in debt, with nothing left for their retirement. That is wrong, and it doesn't have to happen.

This initiative will help women get comprehensive treatment, and get it right away. It will make state-of-the-art therapies available to women who need them, not just those

who can afford them. And it will free State and Federal dollars to be spent on cancer screening and outreach to women at risk.

This proposal has strong bipartisan support in Congress, led by Senators Barbara Mikulski and Olympia Snowe and Representatives Anna Eshoo and Rick Lazio. It was also strongly supported by the late Senator John Chafee of Rhode Island.

These Senators and Representatives from both parties have put forward legislation to meet our goal, and my budget includes the funds to make it happen. This is an issue that transcends political boundaries, because it touches all of us. Together, we can save lives and bring medical miracles of our time within the reach of every American. We can do it this year, and we ought to do it soon.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 1:43 p.m. on February 4 in the Oval Office at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on February 5. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 4 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Statement on the Death of Carl B. Albert

February 5, 2000

Hillary and I were saddened today to learn of the death of Carl Albert. Carl served his country in Congress through three decades, as majority whip, majority leader, and ultimately, Speaker of the House.

Working with President Johnson, he played an invaluable role crafting the greatest effort America had ever launched against poverty. And as the 46th Speaker, he led the House during a trying time in our Nation's history. Through it all, he kept his gaze focused on the national interest. Carl Albert was a true statesman. Our prayers go out to family and friends.

Remarks on Releasing the Fiscal Year 2001 Federal Budget

February 7, 2000

Thank you, John. I really appreciate, in particular, the comment about the first draft

of the State of the Union. *[Laughter]* If you look at how thick that is, you'll have some idea of how many people, believe it or not, are still mad that I didn't mention their program in the speech. *[Laughter]*

I want to thank Secretary Summers, Secretary Slater, Jack Lew, Gene Sperling, Sylvia Mathews, Martin Baily, Bruce Reed, Sally Katzen, all the people from OMB who are here who have worked so hard to put together this budget. I really do appreciate what you've done.

I still get made fun of from time to time as a policy wonk, and that's supposed to be a pejorative term. But I think if you look at the last 7 years, there's a fairly serious argument for the fact that it really does matter what you do and what the specifics are—that Government and public life are more than rhetoric; the reality eventually makes a difference. The specific decisions do count. And that's what this budget is all about.

It is a balanced budget with a balanced approach to our national priorities. It maintains our fiscal discipline, pays down the debt, extends the life of Social Security and Medicare, and invests in our families and our future.

Seven years ago, when I took office, we'd had 12 years of big deficits, a quadrupling of the national debt that had led to high interest rates and low growth. We changed the course with a new economic policy for the new economy, one focused on fiscal discipline, expanded trade, and investments in people and potential.

The new economic policy, as now we all know, has helped to create a new economy. Almost 21 million new jobs now; a 4.0 percent unemployment rate last month, the lowest in 30 years; the fastest growth in 30 years; the lowest crime and welfare rates in 30 years; the lowest poverty rates in 20 years; the highest homeownership ever; and the longest economic expansion in our history this month.

The growth has been driven by private sector investment, not public sector spending, as was the case in the previous 12 years. As a share of the economy, it is worth pointing out that Federal spending is now the smallest it has been since 1966, with the first back-to-back surpluses in 42 years. Federal deficits

are last century's news. This year, according to our projections, we'll have three in a row for our surpluses, coming in at about \$167 billion. We're on the way to an achievement that only a few years ago would have been inconceivable, making America debt-free for the first time since Andrew Jackson was President in 1835.

If you look at the chart behind me, you will see the mountain of debt that built up during the 12 years before I took office and what has already been done to reverse the trend. By the end of this year, we will have paid down the debt by nearly \$300 billion. But you can also see that the debt is still high, far too high.

Now, this is the point where we have the photo op—*[laughter]*—and I attempt to show you what our budget does to the debt, eliminating it by 2013. I have practiced this in the back. *[Laughter]* When I did it in the back, the paint spilled everywhere, and I commented that in every good effort there are still fits and starts. So let me see if I can do it. *[Laughter]* There is no break here. *[Laughter]*

There is nothing academic about that chart. Fiscal discipline matters to every single American. When the deficits disappear, interest rates fall; more Americans can then buy homes, retire student loans, start new businesses, create jobs and wealth. Indeed, our economists have estimated that lower interest rates in the last 7 years have already saved the average American about \$2,000 a year in home mortgage payments and \$200 a year in college loan and car payments.

Our budget ensures that the benefits of debt reduction will continue, and that, among other things, they will go to strengthen two of the most important guarantees we make to every American—Social Security and Medicare. It makes a critical downpayment on Social Security reform by crediting the interest savings from debt reduction attributable to the Social Security taxes to the Social Security Trust Fund. That will keep it strong, solvent, and sound for the next 50 years, which will keep it alive beyond the life expectancy of virtually all of the baby boom generation.

Today we also take in this budget significant steps to strengthen and modernize

Medicare. Our budget dedicates about half the non-Social Security surplus to guarantee the soundness of Medicare, and to add a long overdue voluntary prescription drug benefit. When I became President, Medicare was projected to go broke last year, 1999. Today, it's secure until 2015, thanks to the changes that have already been made.

This budget contains further reforms, but all the experts say, with all conceivable reforms, more money will still be needed, because the number of people over 65 will double in the next 30 years, their life expectancy will increase, we'll have miraculous new developments in medicine which will increase the quality of life. But all these things will add to the costs of health care.

Therefore, I think it is very important that we act now and say we're going to set aside a portion of this surplus for Medicare, so that when the time comes we will have already provided for the costs that we know are coming. We can extend the life of the Medicare Trust Fund until at least 2025 and add the voluntary prescription drug benefit with this amount of dedicated funds.

The budget also provides funds, as I said, to give not only a prescription drug benefit—which more than three in five American seniors on Medicare now lack—it also creates a reserve fund of \$35 billion to protect those who carry the heavy burden of catastrophic drug costs.

This is something that I did not talk about in the State of the Union because I did not know for sure that we would have this money. But I do believe that everybody who's really analyzed this is concerned about two problems. One is that there are a whole lot of seniors—more than half—who don't have access to affordable prescription drug coverage, which at normal costs, will lengthen their lives and improve its quality. And the second big problem is, some seniors have absolutely enormous bills that they have no way of paying, and we believe there ought to be some catastrophic provision, so we have set aside some funds to cover that, too, and will attempt to convince the Congress that we ought to do that as well.

The budget also helps to meet our other pressing priorities. It makes historic investments in education, from Head Start to after-

school, from school construction to more and better trained teachers. It provides health care coverage for the parents of children in the Children's Health Insurance Program, and allows uninsured Americans between the ages of 55 and 65—the fastest growing group of uninsured—to buy into Medicare with a tax credit to help them afford it.

It makes unprecedented investments to speed discoveries in science and technology; funds more police and tougher gun enforcement to keep the crime rate dropping, moving toward our goal of making America the safest big country in the world. It makes critical investments to keep our military the best trained and best equipped in the world. It gives many more investments to what we call America's new markets, from the inner cities to poor rural areas to Native American reservations.

This budget also offers tax cuts to America's working families to help pay for college or save for retirement; to health care for aging or disabled loved ones; to reduce the marriage penalty; to reward work and family with an expanded earned income tax credit, and with an expanded—and refundable—child care tax credit.

This budget, in short, makes really strong and significant steps toward achieving the great goals that I believe America should pursue in this new century. It helps us move toward an America where every child starts school ready to learn and graduates ready to succeed; where parents are able to succeed at home and work, and no child is raised in poverty; where we meet the challenge of the aging of America; where we provide health care to all; where we make America the safest big country on Earth; bring prosperity to the communities and people who have been left behind; pay off our national debt; reverse the course of climate change; keep America leading the world in science and technology, and toward peace and prosperity; and bring our country together, at last, as one America.

This budget takes the right steps toward those goals. I hope it will be well-received in Congress and by the American people. And I thank all of you who worked on it, down to the last detail. The details make the difference, and if we can enact them, they will make all the difference for America.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:22 a.m. in Presidential Hall in the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to White House Chief of Staff John D. Podesta, who introduced the President; and Martin N. Baily, Chairman, Council of Economic Advisers.

**Message to the Congress
Transmitting a Report on the
National Emergency With Respect to
Terrorists Who Threaten To Disrupt
the Middle East Peace Process**

February 7, 2000

To the Congress of the United States:

As required by section 401(c) of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. 1641(c), and section 204(c) of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA), 50 U.S.C. 1703(c), I transmit herewith a 6-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to terrorists who threaten to disrupt the Middle East peace process that was declared in Executive Order 12947 of January 23, 1995.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
February 7, 2000.

**Interview With Willow Bay of Cable
News Network's "Moneyline News
Hour"**

February 7, 2000

Economic Prosperity

Ms. Bay. Mr. President, did you ever imagine in your most optimistic of dreams when you first took office, think that you would see a prosperity like the one we have today?

The President. The truth, I guess I didn't, because I never thought about it. I literally never thought about how long the longest expansion was in history. But what I did believe is that there was this enormous, pent-up potential in the American people because of all the restructuring of industry that went on in the tough years in the 1980's, because of the power of technology which has only

grown exponentially since I've been in office—because I thought the American people understood the global economy and were willing to work hard and not make excessive wage demands and get their pay increases as their companies grew—all that turned out to be true.

So I just thought if I could remove the Government-related obstacles to growth by getting the deficit down and getting interest rates down, that good things would happen. But no, I can't say that I even thought—it never crossed my mind that it would happen.

Ms. Bay. So in your mind, in some ways, was it unleashing a potential that already existed?

The President. Yes. Yes. I think the main role of Government in a global economy like this, and where growth has to come out of the private sector, is to create conditions and give people the tools to do the best they can. And so, to me, the Deficit Reduction Act in '93, the Telecommunications Act, the Balanced Budget Act of '97, saving the surplus, all these things are designed to create the conditions and give people tools.

That's why I think all this investment in science and technology and having a lifetime training system is important. And then the American people will do the rest. I think we have the highest percentage of new jobs, nearly 21 million now, since 1993 in the private sector of any government—excuse me—any economic expansion in our history. They're almost all, way over 90 percent, private jobs.

Ms. Bay. As you have noted, we have built a new economy. What is the most important thing, most effective thing you can do as President to keep that economy going strong?

The President. I think, stick with the present economic strategy first, keep paying the debt down, keep the interest rates down, keep the confidence up, continue to invest in education and training and science and technology, and do more to expand trade. I think that's the most important thing. Then I think we have to continue to look for any impediments to continued growth.

For example, I think over time the Telecommunications Act and the Financial Modernization Act will help a lot. And I think

we have to look for other things. That's why I think this new markets proposal I've made is not going to be valuable just to help poor communities and poor people get investment; I think it will keep growth going without inflation, because it's a new way to bring expansion to areas which haven't enjoyed it.

Ms. Bay. Do you really believe this is a new economy? Because, as you know, many on Wall Street say this is a boom, like others we've seen, and it will come to an end. What in your mind distinguishes it as different, other than its length?

The President. I think there are two things that are different here. First is the role of technology. And let me say, I'm like the people on Wall Street to the extent that I don't pretend that we've repealed the laws of supply and demand, nor do I think we have repealed the potential for human error. So, of course, it could come to an end, and it probably will some day. But what is really distinguishing here is the role of this new high-tech world and the way it rifles through every sector of the economy.

The high-tech economy, itself, basically the Silicon Valley type companies, they account for 8 percent of our employment, but 30 percent of our growth. That understates their impact because computer technology is going through every kind of work, and the reason the traditional economists, including ours, didn't anticipate this level of growth—that you could get down to 4 percent unemployment without any inflation—is that they underestimated the productivity impact of technology. So I think that's the first thing.

The second thing is, keeping our markets open has not only given us a wider range of consumer choices and more competitive pressures, it's kept inflation down, because if we had a more closed market, then these buildups would not have the outlets they have—whether it's in homebuilding or whatever.

Ms. Bay. Do you worry at all, though, with our enthusiasm about this prosperity, with our genuine excitement over the technological revolution that we're witnessing, that we are convincing folks that this really is a boom without end?

The President. Well, I think that's what Chairman Greenspan is trying to caution

against. He's trying to make sure that we don't go so fast we play it out prematurely. And I think that's what he's tried to do in the years we've worked together.

I think it's important not to over-promise, not to over-claim, but I also believe all the evidence is that there's still a lot of creativity left, there's still a lot of room for new investment, there's still a lot of room for growth if we remember the fundamentals—keep investing in science and technology, keep investing in education and training, keep paying the debt down and keep the markets open and keep expanding our markets. I think if you stay with that—obviously something could go wrong, but I think if we're not over-promising and we're on a steady course, I think we'll continue to have growth.

FY 2001 Budget

Ms. Bay. Your final budget was delivered to Congress today. On the surface, at least, it looks as if you're loosening the reins on spending a bit, revising the spending caps. Why should Americans want their Government to spend a little bit more in 2001?

The President. Well, first of all, the last couple of years we've spent more, and last year the Congress just shredded the spending caps. They just did it by calling certain normal expenditures emergencies. So this is basically a straightforward budget. I took the spending levels of last year and I said, let's not pretend anymore that we don't want to add at least inflation to education, to medical research, to the environment, to health care. We know we're going to do that. So let's project for the next 5 years that we'll have last year's spending plus inflation, and then we'll argue about the categories of growth.

But I think Americans should want us to invest more. We've cut spending for quite a long while. As a percentage of our economy, Federal Government spending is the lowest it's been since 1966. The size of the Government is the lowest it's been in 40 years. So what we should do, now that we've trimmed down, now that we've got a surplus, we should keep paying the debt down, but we ought to invest more, I believe, in education, in science and technology, in health care, to help parents balance the needs at home and at work, and I think we can afford

a modest tax cut, which I also believe is important.

Ms. Bay. You've added some revenue raisers, like closing some corporate tax loopholes. Likely to be a rather tough sell in Congress. If you don't accomplish those, do your numbers still work out?

The President. Well, if all the numbers don't work out, we'll have to spend less or have a smaller tax cut. Because to me, the only number that has to work out is we've got to keep paying the debt down; we've got to not jeopardize our ability to take care of Social Security when the baby boomers retire; and we've got to hold back enough money so that Medicare stays stable and doesn't throw the whole budget out of whack or otherwise severely hurt seniors over the next 15 or 20 years.

So, to me, those are the key things and everything else operates from that framework. So, for example, if they decide not to close some of the corporate loopholes, so we have however much less money that is over a 5-year period, then we'll either have to spend less or we'll have to have a smaller tax cut.

Budget's Reception in Congress

Ms. Bay. John Kasich, chairman of the House Budget Committee, declared your budget dead on arrival. How tough a battle are you likely to face?

The President. Well, that's what they said in '99, and we got most of it; that's what they said in '98, and we got most of it. If our crowd will—the people that agree with me—and they're not confined solely to the Democrats—we have almost 100 percent support, I think, in our party for our budget approach because we believe we should invest more in education; we believe we should invest more in health care. But I think there are also quite a number of Republicans who agree with us. So I think if we just relax and stay tough until the end of the year, we'll do fine, just like we have in the last several years.

Ms. Bay. What are likely to be the most contentious issues?

The President. Well, I think the contents of any tax cut will be contentious. I don't believe the Republicans this year will contest

me on the size, because I think they've seen even in their own party that Americans don't want to run the risk of going back to deficits. They know this strategy is working.

But I feel strongly that we should focus the tax cuts on the needs of middle class families, like to pay for college tuition, long-term care for elderly and disabled relatives, expanding the earned-income tax credit for poor people, a genuine easing of the marriage penalty for people in the middle and even in lower middle income groups. But we ought to focus it there. I think they have some different ideas; we'll fight about that.

I think that a lot of them don't support our efforts to put 100,000 more teachers in the classroom, so we're going to fight over that for a third year. But we got it the first 2 years. And of course, they're against, by and large, they're more against the Patients' Bill of Rights than I am. I hope they'll raise the minimum wage, but some of them won't want to. So we'll have plenty to fight about.

Tax Reform

Ms. Bay. Do you think it's likely you'll see an easing of the marriage penalty? I know it's a hot topic of conversation right now.

The President. I do. Because I want to have a genuinely constructive atmosphere, I put a proposal to them on the marriage penalty because I know that's something they've always thought was important, too. And all I asked them to do was to confine their bill to the marriage penalty issue and to give a little relief to people in the lower income of the scale, too.

Their marriage penalty bill, in addition to easing the marriage penalty, has a whole lot of other stuff in it. So if they'll meet me half-way, we'll work something out. I think there's a fair chance we'll get that.

Debt Buybacks and the Bond Market

Ms. Bay. There was an interesting situation last week, caused largely by the surplus. As you know, the Treasury announced plans to buy back some of its debt and reduce the supply of new debt. It caused a fair amount of turmoil in the bond markets. Were you surprised by that kind of reaction in the bond market?

The President. A little bit, only because we had made clear several weeks before that we might want to buy some of our debt in early. If it had been the first time it had ever been mentioned, I wouldn't have been so surprised. And there is a debate going on now about whether it's even a good thing for us to pay ourselves out of debt, because there are some people that believe we have to have enough publicly held debt to establish the bond market, which is a, if you will, a barometer for the overall financial framework of the capital markets.

But my concern is, we financed this expansion privately. There is quite a lot of private debt outstanding; it doesn't look at all troubling today because there is so much private wealth outstanding. But I just don't want to run the risk of the thing getting out of balance. So I think as long as we're growing this way, the Government should continue to pay down the debt. And we have to buy in the bonds to do that.

Ms. Bay. Could or should the Treasury have done anything to manage the bond market more effectively, particularly given that this is unprecedented and likely to be an ongoing concern?

The President. I don't know the answer to that because, as I said, my—unless my memory is totally out of whack here, I think we announced several weeks earlier than that, we plan to buy the bonds in, and some of them would be brought in before term. So I think Secretary Summers is a very smart man and he understands this and he talks to people in the private sector all the time, and I think they'll do it the best way they can.

But just yesterday Chairman Greenspan said again that he thought the best thing that we could do in the executive branch would be to continue to take the debt down, and he hoped Congress would cooperate. So I think we're all—if we're wrong, we're all wrong together, anyway—and I don't think we are.

Information Age Entrepreneurship

Ms. Bay. On a more personal note, you are clearly a believer in this new economy. If you were starting your career today, would

you be tempted to start a career on the frontlines of this revolution or——

The President. Oh, absolutely.

Ms. Bay. You would?

The President. Absolutely. It's so exciting. I mean, you talk to all these young people who are out there and have come up with these ideas, and they have access to capital, and they do things. And then when they—a lot of them make a phenomenal amount of money in almost no time, but they also hire people, they're interested in contributing to the strength of society. I never bought this generation X argument; most of these young people really care about the overall health of America. And I think the idea of having an economy that really is running on ideas is a very exciting prospect for the future.

Ms. Bay. Tempted, perhaps, to run a .com?

The President. Yes, I would be. If I were starting again, I would be. You know, I'm probably too old to do it now. I'll have to find something else to do in a year, so maybe I'll think about it then. [Laughter] But I'm not sure I'm not too creaky around the edges to do it.

2000 Election

Ms. Bay. Word is they could use some experience in the .com world. [Laughter]

Final question. In the middle of this campaign season, Senator McCain is running as an outsider, in part, against you and your legacy. Yet, his economic platform looks surprisingly like Clinton/Gore economic policy. Does that make him a more formidable opponent for Al Gore?

The President. Well, first of all, I think that every person in the last 30 years—including me, when I ran—you always run as an outsider, because more people live outside Washington than inside Washington, and people always think of it as a distant place.

But I think it's both flattering and I think encouraging that Republicans generally have turned away from tax cuts that are so big that they could trouble our economy. And no matter who wins their nomination, there are lots of other differences between our two

parties and our candidates that the American people will have a chance to think about.

I think it would be a very good thing if we could establish a bipartisan consensus that we're going to keep paying this debt down; we're going to save Social Security for the baby boom generation; we're not going to allow Medicare to go broke. That would be a good thing, and it would be worthy of—you know, in a global economy, having a common economic policy is part of our national security.

Now, that would be attractive. Then the burden would fall on both the Democrats and Republicans to clarify what the other issues are and what the differences are. So I think, really, it's quite impossible to predict, this early, how this thing will change. It's one of the things I've learned watching Presidential politics over more than half my life now—that they'll change. Once you think you've got it figured out, the American people are still in the saddle, and they'll change it on you.

Hillary Clinton's Senate Candidacy

Ms. Bay. Speaking of politics, congratulations. Mrs. Clinton made it formal over the weekend, announcing her campaign for the U.S. Senate.

The President. She did.

Ms. Bay. Are you really prepared to hit the campaign trail again, and this time as a supportive spouse?

The President. Well, I will do whatever I can to help her. And New York has been very good to me and wonderful to us, to our family, to our administration, to the Vice President. But I think now what they want to do is hear from her. Yesterday was her day. I thought she was terrific. I was so proud of her. I loved her speech and what she said and what she's running on. If I can help her, of course, I will.

But my instinct is that the people of New York want to hear from her directly, and that if I can help her, it will be later in the campaign, when we get down to the—longer toward the end and there's fundamental decisions to be made by a relatively small number of voters who might be willing to listen to my arguments—not because it's me, but just because I have a microphone.

But people are pretty independent in this country, and they like to make their own decisions, and they're not going to vote for her just because she's my wife; but they might vote for her because we share some values and some approaches to the issues. And they want to make their own judgment about her. I thought she was terrific when she announced. I was so proud of her. And I'll be happy to be a member of the Senate spouses' club. I hope I get to be. [*Laughter*]

Ms. Bay. President Clinton, thank you very much for joining us tonight.

The President. Thank you.

NOTE: The interview began at 5:20 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House, but the transcript was embargoed for release by the Office of the Press Secretary until 7:30 p.m. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

Remarks on Signing an Executive Order To Prohibit Discrimination in Federal Employment Based on Genetic Information

February 8, 2000

Thank you very much, and good afternoon. I want to begin by thanking all the people at AAAS for having us here today—my long-time friend Dr. Shirley Malcolm, thank you. And thank you, Dr. Richard Nicholson. I thank Dr. Francis Collins—what a remarkable statement he made.

I was thinking when he said that line that I'm beating to death now that we're all genetically 99.9 percent the same, that the one-tenth of one percent difference between him and me is all the intellectual capacity for the sciences—[*laughter*—regrettably. That's a great thing for people who care about the future of the human genome.

I'm delighted to be joined here by several members of our administration and by three Members of Congress, showing that this is a bipartisan issue; it's an American issue. I thank Representative Louise Slaughter from New York, who was with me yesterday talking to me about this, and Representative Fred Upton from Michigan, and Representative and Dr. Greg Ganske from Iowa. Thank

you all for being here. We appreciate you very much and your concern for this.

I thank again all the people in the administration who worked on this—my Science Adviser, Dr. Neal Lane, and all the people from OPM and the EEOC and others.

This is really a happy day for me. For years, in our administration, I was a sort of political front person, and now we've got the first election in a quarter-century that I can't be a part of. And people are always coming to me saying, "Oh, this must be a real downer for you, you know, that the Vice President and Hillary, they're out there 7 o'clock in the morning hitting all these coffee shops, you must be"—[*laughter*]"—"how are you dealing with this terrible deprivation?" [*Laughter*]

And I went out to Caltech the other day to talk about my science and technology budget, and I said, "Well, I'm using this opportunity to get in touch with my inner nerd"—[*laughter*]"—"and to really sort of deal with these things that I have repressed all these years, that I'm really, really trying to get into this." We're laughing about this. But, you know, it is truly astonishing that we are all privileged enough to be alive at this moment in history, and to be, some of us, even a small part of this remarkable explosion in human discovery; to contemplate not only what it might mean for us and our contemporaries, in terms of lengthening our lives and improving the quality of them, and improving the reach of our understanding of what is going on, both within our bodies and in the far reaches of space, but what particularly it will mean for the whole structure of life for our children and grandchildren.

And I am profoundly grateful to all of you who have been involved, and who will be involved, in that march of human advance in any way. That quest for knowledge has defined what the AAAS has done for, now, more than 150 years.

We are here today, as the previous speakers have said, to recognize that this extraordinary march of human understanding imposes on us profound responsibilities, to make sure that the age of discovery can continue to reflect our most cherished values. And I want to talk just a little about that

in somewhat more detail than Dr. Collins did.

First and foremost, we must protect our citizens' privacy—the bulwark of personal liberty, the safeguard of individual creativity. More than 100 years ago now, Justice Brandeis recognized that technological advances would require us to be ever-vigilant in protecting what he said was civilization's most valued right, the fundamental right to privacy. "New conditions," he said, "would often require us to define anew the exact nature and extent of such protection." And indeed, much of the 20th century jurisprudence of the Supreme Court has dealt with that continuing challenge in various contexts. So, once again, Justice Brandeis has proved prophetic for a new century.

Today, powerful ways of technological change threaten to erode our sacred walls of privacy in ways we could not have envisioned a generation ago—not just the ways, by the way, we're discussing here today. Will you ever have a private telephone conversation on a cell phone again? Can you even go in your own home and know that the conversation is private if you become important enough for people to put devices on your walls? What is the nature of privacy in the 21st century, and how can we continue to protect it?

But clearly, people's medical records, their financial records, and their genetic records are among the most important things that we have to protect. Last year we proposed rules to protect the sanctity of medical records; we'll finalize them this year. Soon I will send legislation to complete the job we started in protecting citizen's financial records. Today we move forward to try to make sure we do what we can to protect, in an important way, genetic privacy.

Clearly, there is no more exciting frontier in modern scientific research than genome research. Dr. Collins did a good job of telling us why. And when this human genome project is completed, we can now only barely imagine, I believe, the full implications of what we will learn for the detection, treatment, and prevention of serious diseases. It will transform medical care more profoundly

than anything since the discovery of antibiotics and the polio vaccine, I believe, far more profoundly than that.

But it will also impose upon us new responsibilities and, I would argue, only some of which we now know—only some of which we now know—to ensure that the new discoveries do not pry open the protective doors of privacy.

The fear of misuse of private genetic information is already very widespread in our Nation. Americans are genuinely worried that their genetic information will not be kept secret, that this information will be used against them. As a result, they're often reluctant to take advantage of new breakthroughs in genetic testing—making a point, I think, we cannot make too often—if we do not protect the right to privacy, we may actually impede the reach of these breakthroughs in the lives of ordinary people, which would be a profound tragedy.

A Pennsylvania study, for example, showed that nearly a third of women at high risk for inherited forms of breast cancer refused to be tested to determine whether they carry either of the two known breast cancer genes because they feared discrimination based on the results. That is simply wrong. We must not allow advances in genetics to become the basis of discrimination against any individual or any group. We must never allow these discoveries to change the basic belief upon which our Government, our society, our system of ethics is founded, that all of us are created equal, entitled to equal treatment under the law.

The Executive order I will sign in just a couple of minutes will be the first Executive order of the 21st century to help meet this great 21st century challenge. It prohibits the Federal Government and its agencies from using genetic testing in any employment decision. It prevents Federal employers from requesting or requiring that employees undergo genetic tests of any kind. It strictly forbids employers from using genetic information to classify employees in such a way that deprives them of advancement opportunities, such as promotion for overseas posts.

By signing this Executive order, my goal is to set an example and pose a challenge for every employer in America, because I be-

lieve no employer should ever review your genetic records along with your resume.

Because, by Executive order, I can only do so much, we also need congressional action this year. In 1996 the Congress passed, and I signed, the Kassebaum-Kennedy bill, the health insurance portability law, which made it illegal for group health insurers to deny coverage to any individual based on genetic information. That was an important first step, but we must go further.

Now I ask Congress to pass the "Genetic Non-Discrimination in Health Insurance and Employment Act" introduced in the Senate by Senator Daschle and in the House by Congresswoman Louise Slaughter, who is with us today. What this legislation does is to extend the employment protections contained in the Executive order that I will sign today to all private sector employees as well, and to ensure that people in all health plans, not just group plans, will have the full confidence that the fruits of genetic research will be used solely to improve their care and never to deny them care.

There is something else we should do right away. We must make absolutely sure that we do not allow the race for genetic cures to undermine vital patient protections. Like many Americans, I have been extremely concerned about reports that some families involved in trials of experimental gene therapies have not been fully informed of the risks and that some scientists have failed to report serious side effects from these trials. I support the recent action by FDA and NIH to enforce reporting in patient safety requirements.

Today I'm asking Secretary Shalala to instruct FDA and NIH to accelerate their review of gene therapy guidelines and regulations. I want to know how we can better ensure that this information about the trials is shared with the public. I want to know whether we need to strengthen requirements on informed consent. If we don't have full confidence in these trials, people won't participate, and then the true promise of genetic medicine will be put on hold. We cannot allow our remarkable progress in genomic research to be undermined by concerns over the privacy of genetic data or the safety of

gene therapies. Instead, we must do whatever it takes to address these legitimate concerns. We know if we do, the positive possibilities are absolutely endless.

I said this the other day, but I would like to reiterate—I think maybe I am so excited about this because of my age. I was in the generation of children who were the first treated with the polio vaccine. And for those of you who are much younger than me, you can't imagine what it was like for our parents to see the literal terror in our parents' eyes when we were children, paralyzed with fear that somehow we would be afflicted by what was then called infantile paralysis; and the sense of hope, the eagerness, the sort of nail-biting anticipation, when we learned of the Salk vaccine, and all of us were lined up to get our shots. Unless you were in our generation, you cannot imagine.

And the thought that every other problem that could affect the generation of my grandchildren could be visited with that level of relief and hope and exhilaration by the parents of our children's generation is something that is almost inexpressible.

We have to make the most of this. And we know, we have learned from over 200 years of experience as a nation, knocking down physical and intellectual frontiers, that we can only spread the benefits of new discoveries when we proceed in a manner that is consistent with our most ancient and cherished values. That is what this day is all about. So to all of you who have contributed to it, I thank you very, very much.

Now I would like to ask the Members of Congress who are here and members of the administration who are here, who have been involved in this to come up with me. And all I have to do is write my name. *[Laughter]* That's a pretty good deal. You can write the human genome code, and I'll write my name—*[laughter]*—and that takes full account of the one-tenth of one percent difference in our genetic makeup. *[Laughter]*

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:40 p.m. in the auditorium at the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS). In his remarks, he referred to Shirley Malcolm, head of the directorate for education and human resources programs, and Richard S. Nicholson, member, board

of directors, and executive officer, AAAS; and Francis S. Collins, Director, National Human Genome Research Institute, National Institutes of Health.

Executive Order 13145—To Prohibit Discrimination in Federal Employment Based on Genetic Information

February 8, 2000

By the authority vested in me as President of the United States by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, it is ordered as follows:

Section 1. Nondiscrimination in Federal Employment on the Basis of Protected Genetic Information.

1–101. It is the policy of the Government of the United States to provide equal employment opportunity in Federal employment for all qualified persons and to prohibit discrimination against employees based on protected genetic information, or information about a request for or the receipt of genetic services. This policy of equal opportunity applies to every aspect of Federal employment.

1–102. The head of each Executive department and agency shall extend the policy set forth in section 1–101 to all its employees covered by section 717 of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended (42 U.S.C. 2000e–16).

1–103. Executive departments and agencies shall carry out the provisions of this order to the extent permitted by law and consistent with their statutory and regulatory authorities, and their enforcement mechanisms. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission shall be responsible for coordinating the policy of the Government of the United States to prohibit discrimination against employees in Federal employment based on protected genetic information, or information about a request for or the receipt of genetic services.

Sec. 2. Requirements Applicable to Employing Departments and Agencies.

1–201. Definitions.

(a) The term “employee” shall include an employee, applicant for employment, or former employee covered by section 717 of

the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended (42 U.S.C. 2000e-16).

(b) Genetic monitoring means the periodic examination of employees to evaluate acquired modifications to their genetic material, such as chromosomal damage or evidence of increased occurrence of mutations, that may have developed in the course of employment due to exposure to toxic substances in the workplace, in order to identify, evaluate, respond to the effects of, or control adverse environmental exposures in the workplace.

(c) Genetic services means health services, including genetic tests, provided to obtain, assess, or interpret genetic information for diagnostic or therapeutic purposes, or for genetic education or counseling.

(d) Genetic test means the analysis of human DNA, RNA, chromosomes, proteins, or certain metabolites in order to detect disease-related genotypes or mutations. Tests for metabolites fall within the definition of "genetic tests" when an excess or deficiency of the metabolites indicates the presence of a mutation or mutations. The conducting of metabolic tests by a department or agency that are not intended to reveal the presence of a mutation shall not be considered a violation of this order, regardless of the results of the tests. Test results revealing a mutation shall, however, be subject to the provisions of this order.

(e) Protected genetic information.

(1) In general, protected genetic information means:

- (A) information about an individual's genetic tests;
 - (B) information about the genetic tests of an individual's family members; or
 - (C) information about the occurrence of a disease, or medical condition or disorder in family members of the individual.
- (2) Information about an individual's current health status (including information about sex, age, physical exams, and chemical, blood, or urine analyses) is not protected genetic information unless it is described in subparagraph (1).

1-202. In discharging their responsibilities under this order, departments and agencies

shall implement the following nondiscrimination requirements.

(a) The employing department or agency shall not discharge, fail or refuse to hire, or otherwise discriminate against any employee with respect to the compensation, terms, conditions, or privileges of employment of that employee, because of protected genetic information with respect to the employee, or because of information about a request for or the receipt of genetic services by such employee.

(b) The employing department or agency shall not limit, segregate, or classify employees in any way that would deprive or tend to deprive any employee of employment opportunities or otherwise adversely affect that employee's status, because of protected genetic information with respect to the employee or because of information about a request for or the receipt of genetic services by such employee.

(c) The employing department or agency shall not request, require, collect, or purchase protected genetic information with respect to an employee, or information about a request for or the receipt of genetic services by such employee.

(d) The employing department or agency shall not disclose protected genetic information with respect to an employee, or information about a request for or the receipt of genetic services by an employee except:

- (1) to the employee who is the subject of the information, at his or her request;
- (2) to an occupational or other health researcher, if the research conducted complies with the regulations and protections provided for under part 46 of title 45, of the Code of Federal Regulations;
- (3) if required by a Federal statute, congressional subpoena, or an order issued by a court of competent jurisdiction, except that if the subpoena or court order was secured without the knowledge of the individual to whom the information refers, the employer shall provide the individual with adequate notice to challenge the subpoena or court order, unless the

subpoena or court order also imposes confidentiality requirements; or

- (4) to executive branch officials investigating compliance with this order, if the information is relevant to the investigation.

(e) The employing department or agency shall not maintain protected genetic information or information about a request for or the receipt of genetic services in general personnel files; such information shall be treated as confidential medical records and kept separate from personnel files.

Sec. 3. Exceptions.

1-301. The following exceptions shall apply to the nondiscrimination requirements set forth in section 1-202.

(a) The employing department or agency may request or require information defined in section 1-201(e)(1)(C) with respect to an applicant who has been given a conditional offer of employment or to an employee if:

- (1) the request or requirement is consistent with the Rehabilitation Act and other applicable law;
- (2) the information obtained is to be used exclusively to assess whether further medical evaluation is needed to diagnose a current disease, or medical condition or disorder, or under the terms of section 1-301(b) of this order;
- (3) such current disease, or medical condition or disorder could prevent the applicant or employee from performing the essential functions of the position held or desired; and
- (4) the information defined in section 1-201(e)(1)(C) of this order will not be disclosed to persons other than medical personnel involved in or responsible for assessing whether further medical evaluation is needed to diagnose a current disease, or medical condition or disorder, or under the terms of section 1-301(b) of this order.

(b) The employing department or agency may request, collect, or purchase protected genetic information with respect to an employee, or any information about a request for or receipt of genetic services by such employee if:

- (1) the employee uses genetic or health care services provided by the employer (other than use pursuant to section 1-301(a) of this order);
 - (2) the employee who uses the genetic or health care services has provided prior knowing, voluntary, and written authorization to the employer to collect protected genetic information;
 - (3) the person who performs the genetic or health care services does not disclose protected genetic information to anyone except to the employee who uses the services for treatment of the individual; pursuant to section 1-202(d) of this order; for program evaluation or assessment; for compiling and analyzing information in anticipation of or for use in a civil or criminal legal proceeding; or for payment or accounting purposes, to verify that the service was performed (but in such cases the genetic information itself cannot be disclosed);
 - (4) such information is not used in violation of sections 1-202(a) or 1-202(b) of this order.
- (c) The employing department or agency may collect protected genetic information with respect to an employee if the requirements of part 46 of title 45 of the Code of Federal Regulations are met.
- (d) Genetic monitoring of biological effects of toxic substances in the workplace shall be permitted if all of the following conditions are met:
- (1) the employee has provided prior, knowing, voluntary, and written authorization;
 - (2) the employee is notified when the results of the monitoring are available and, at that time, the employer makes any protected genetic information that may have been acquired during the monitoring available to the employee and informs the employee how to obtain such information;
 - (3) the monitoring conforms to any genetic monitoring regulations that may

be promulgated by the Secretary of Labor; and

- (4) the employer, excluding any licensed health care professionals that are involved in the genetic monitoring program, receives results of the monitoring only in aggregate terms that do not disclose the identity of specific employees.

(e) This order does not limit the statutory authority of a Federal department or agency to:

- (1) promulgate or enforce workplace safety and health laws and regulations;
- (2) conduct or sponsor occupational or other health research that is conducted in compliance with regulations at part 46 of title 45, of the Code of Federal Regulations; or
- (3) collect protected genetic information as a part of a lawful program, the primary purpose of which is to carry out identification purposes.

Sec. 4. Miscellaneous.

1–401. The head of each department and agency shall take appropriate action to disseminate this policy and, to this end, shall designate a high level official responsible for carrying out its responsibilities under this order.

1–402. Nothing in this order shall be construed to:

(a) limit the rights or protections of an individual under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 701, *et seq.*), the Privacy Act of 1974 (5 U.S.C. 552a), or other applicable law; or

(b) require specific benefits for an employee or dependent under the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program or similar program.

1–403. This order clarifies and makes uniform Administration policy and does not create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law by a party against the United States, its officers or employees, or any other person.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
February 8, 2000.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., February 9, 2000]

NOTE: This Executive order was published in the *Federal Register* on February 10.

**Remarks on Presenting the
Congressional Medal of Honor
to Alfred Rascon**

February 8, 2000

The President. Colonel, thank you for that prayer. General Hicks, Secretary Cohen, Secretary West, Secretary Richardson, Secretary Caldera, General Shelton, General Ralston, members of the Joint Chiefs, all the Members of Congress who are here—and we have quite a distinguished array of them. We thank them all for coming. I'd like to ask the Members of Congress who are here to stand so you'll see how many we have. We're very grateful to you for your presence here. Thank you.

When the Medal of Honor was conceived in 1861, some Americans actually worried that it might be a bad thing, that the medals would be seen as somehow too aristocratic, and that there was no need for them in a genuinely democratic society. Today, we award the Medal of Honor, secure in the knowledge that people like Alfred Rascon have kept our democracy alive all these years.

We bestow the medal knowing that America would not have survived were it not for people like him, who, generation after generation, have always renewed the extraordinary gift of freedom for their fellow citizens.

Under any circumstances, a Medal of Honor ceremony is an event of great importance. Today it is especially so: for the rare quality of heroism on display that long-ago day in 1966; for the long, patient wait for recognition; for Alfred's decision to devote his life both before and after 1966 to a nation he was not born in.

Alfred Rascon was born in Mexico on September 10, 1945, just 8 days after the formal surrender ending World War II. When he was very young, his parents came to America for a better chance. They ended up in Oxnard, north of Los Angeles. And when Alfred started grade school, he still spoke not

a word of English. He grew up near three military bases and fell in love with the Armed Forces. At the advanced age of 7, wanting to do his part to defend America, he built a homemade parachute and jumped off the roof of his house. [Laughter] Unfortunately, in his own words, the chute had a “total malfunction”—[laughter]—and he broke his wrist.

But as usual, he was undeterred. Soon he graduated from high school and enlisted in the United States Army. Appropriately, he became a medic for a platoon of paratroopers, the first of the 503d Airborne Battalion of the 173d Airborne Brigade. He explained, “I wanted to give back something to this country and its citizens for the opportunities it had given me and my parents. Those paratroopers who served with me in the reconnaissance platoon knew nothing of my immigrant status. It was never an issue. They simply knew me as Doc.”

Alfred's platoon was sent to Vietnam in May of 1965, part of the first Army combat unit there. On March 16th, 1966, they were in Long Khanh Province, helping another platoon that was pinned down by the enemy. In his words, it was “10 minutes of pure hell.”

In the middle of an intense firefight, Alfred was everywhere. While attending to a fatally wounded machine gunner, Private William Thompson, he was hit with shrapnel and shot in the hip. The bullet went parallel to his spine and came out by his shoulder. Ignoring his own wounds, he then brought desperately needed ammo to another machine gunner, Private Larry Gibson. Several grenades then landed nearby. One of them ripped his mouth open. When he saw another land near Private Neil Haffey, he covered him with his body, absorbing the brunt of the blast. Yet another grenade landed near Sergeant Ray Compton, and Alfred covered him, too. Then, barely able to walk, bleeding from his ears and nose, he ran to recover a machine gun that the enemy was about to capture. The extra firepower kept the enemy from advancing, and Alfred Rascon saved his platoon.

Through this extraordinary succession of courageous acts, he never gave a single thought to himself, except, he admits, for the instant when the grenade exploded near his

face and he thought, “Oh, God, my good looks are gone.” [Laughter] I'm not much of an expert, but I would say you were wrong about that, Captain. [Laughter] You look just fine here today.

On that distant day, in that faraway place, this man gave everything he had, utterly and selflessly, to protect his platoon mates and the Nation he was still not yet a citizen of. Later he said with characteristic modesty, “I did it because I had to do it, and that's all there is to it.” He said, “I don't consider myself a hero. Anybody in combat would do the same thing for their buddies and friends. We were all colorblind. We were all different nationalities. The important thing is that we were Americans fighting for America.”

I want to stop just for a moment to salute all the other Americans who did that in Vietnam. We want to honor you today, along with Alfred. Many of you were there with him. And I'd like for all of you to stand or, if you can't stand, lift your arms and be recognized. We want to acknowledge you today, please. [Applause]

Alfred Rascon was so badly wounded that day he was actually given last rites. After a long convalescence, he pulled through, and he continued to serve his country. He became a citizen in 1967. He rejoined the Army as an officer. In 1972 he volunteered for a second tour in Vietnam. And in 1983 he began working for the Justice Department. Today, he is the Inspector General of the Selective Service System, helping to make sure that others will be there to defend America as he did.

Looking at his lifetime of service to our Nation, it would be hard to imagine a better definition of citizenship. So I would like to also take a moment, sir, to thank your parents, Alfredo and Andrea, for teaching their son the values of good citizenship. And we would all like to welcome your wife, Carol, and your children, Amanda and Alan. They must be so very proud of you today. We welcome you here.

Now, here's a story of how we all came here. Alfred Rascon was given a Silver Star for his valor that day in 1966. But the request for his Medal of Honor somehow got lost in a thicket of redtape. His platoon mates persisted, showing as much loyalty to him as

he had shown to them. Thanks to them, after 34 years, I am proud to present you with our Nation's highest honor.

Since the creation of the Medal of Honor, roughly one in five of them have been awarded to immigrants. Today, there are over 60,000 immigrants protecting the United States in our military.

Alfred was once asked why he volunteered to join and to go to Vietnam when he was not even a citizen. And he said, "I was always an American in my heart."

Alfred Rascon, today we honor you as you have honored us, by your choice to become an American and your courage in reflecting the best of America. You said that you summoned your courage for your platoon because "you've got to take care of your people." That's a pretty good credo for all the rest of us, as well.

On behalf of all Americans, and especially on behalf of your platoon members who are here today, I thank you for what you mean to our country. Thank you for what you gave that day and what you have given every day since. Thank you for reminding us that being American has nothing to do with the place of your birth, the color of your skin, the language of your parents, or the way you worship God. Thank you for living the enduring American values every day. Thank you for doing something that was hard because no one else was there to do it. Thank you for looking out for people when no one else could be there for them.

You have taught us once again that being American has nothing to do with the place of birth, racial, ethnic origin, or religious faith. It comes straight from the heart. And your heart, sir, is an extraordinary gift to your country.

Commander, please read the citation.

[At this point, Comdr. Michael M. Gilday, USN, Navy Aide to the President, read the citations, and the President presented the medal. Alfred Rascon made brief remarks.]

The President. I want to thank you all again for being here today and invite you to join our honoree and his family in a reception in the State Dining Room at the end of the hall. Thank you very much, and welcome.

But don't leave until we have the benediction. *[Laughter]*

General Hicks.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:35 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Lt. Col. Frank Vavrin, USA (Ret.), Chaplain Corps, 503d Airborne Battalion, who gave the invocation; and Brig. Gen. David Hicks, USA, Deputy Chief of Chaplains. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Alfred Rascon.

Statement on the Election of Stipe Mesic as President of Croatia

February 8, 2000

I congratulate President-elect Stipe Mesic on his victory in Monday's elections in Croatia. Mr. Mesic's victory is a turning point for Croatia. It brings with it the promise of genuine democracy and a normal life for Croatia's people, stronger ties between our two nations, and greater stability throughout southeast Europe. The people of Croatia have clearly demonstrated their desire to see their country take its rightful place in Europe. The United States will do everything it can to help them reach their destination. And together we will send a clear message to all the people of the Balkans that a brighter future is within their grasp.

I look forward to working closely with President-elect Mesic, Prime Minister Racan, and the new government in Zagreb.

NOTE: In the statement, the President referred to Prime Minister Ivica Racan of Croatia.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Reception

February 8, 2000

Thank you very much. Thank you, John. Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for being here tonight and for your support for our party. I wanted to just say a few words, and then we'll visit a little.

I did put out the budget yesterday. And I've had a great week. We had the State of the Union, and then I went to Switzerland, to Davos, to the International Economic

Forum, to talk about what I believe our policy ought to be on trade in the 21st century. And before I issued my budget I got to hear my wife make a great speech on Sunday when she announced for the Senate in New York. I was very proud of her. I thought she did a wonderful job.

Today I took action on another item I discussed in the State of the Union over at the American Academy of Sciences. I signed the first Executive order of the 21st century, protecting the genetic privacy of all Federal employees and asking Congress to do that for all employees throughout the country. I think that this a very important issue. We're going to have all this huge explosion of knowledge when we finish demapping the human genome. And we want people to participate to the maximum possible degree and all benefits that will flow out of that.

And if we expect that, then we're going to have to make sure that they don't lose the right to a job, lose the right to get insurance, lose the right to be considered for promotion because their genetic map shows that they might have some propensity to some problem. We want people to participate in every conceivable way in learning about it so that we can develop blocking gene therapies for all the problems people have.

So this is a very, very exciting time for our country. For me, it's actually rather interesting. For the first time in probably 24 years to see an election season come and go when I'm not on anybody's ballot anywhere—[laughter]—it's rather interesting. I'm having a good time. [Laughter] I feel like the cat that ate the canary some days.

But one of the things I would like to say to all of you, that I hope you will keep in mind throughout this year—as you support us, as you talk to your friends, as you make arguments for our candidates, from the White House to the Senate and the House and the governorships—is that the Democratic Party now has had 7 years of testing our dominant philosophy. And I think it's pretty clear, number one, that it works, and number two, that it's shared by a majority of the American people.

Seven years ago when we began, we just had a roadmap for the future. We said, "Look, we believe that there is a reason the

country is suffering from economic stagnation and social division and political gridlock and that governments didn't discredit it, that we were operating under a philosophy that said Government was the problem, that pitted people against one another and that was very good about talking about problems like the deficit but not very good about doing anything about it."

And we came to this town—our whole administration did, beginning with the Vice President and me—with a philosophy that said we were going to unify this country, that we were going to try to create opportunity for everybody, challenge everyone to be responsible, and bring everybody together in one community. And we were actually going to try to bring Washington together—I must say, we've had more success in the country than we have in Washington. [Laughter] But still, it's been an exhilarating effort here, and still a challenge every day.

So now we've had 7 years of these results. And I just want to say what I said in the State of the Union Address. I think it is imperative that we not squander this moment under the illusion that because things are going well for this country there are no consequences to what we say, what we do, and what we advocate. We live in a very dynamic world. Things are changing very rapidly. We have never had this kind of opportunity to shape the future.

A few of you in this room are as old as I am. I was telling somebody the other day that when we passed the milestone to having the longest economic expansion in history, the last one that was this long—the next to longest one now—was the one that occurred in the decade of the sixties. And you probably all remember that it played out under the inflationary pressures of what was then known as guns and butter, the Vietnam war, and our obligations at home.

When I graduated from high school in 1964, even though the country was still hurting over President Kennedy's assassination, we had actually come together and lifted ourselves up out of that. And there was this sense that there was nothing we couldn't do. Within 2 years, we had riots in the streets; the country was deeply divided over the war

in Vietnam; we had over a half a million people there. Within a couple more years, the economy was in terrible shape. And the politics of division, basically, began to rule our national campaigns.

As an American citizen, I have waited now about 35 years for my country once again to be in a position to basically be a nation of builders and dreamers, where we could shape the future. That's why in the State of the Union Address I said we've got to, number one, remember what brought us to the dance here. We've got to stay with an economic policy that has given us the ability to deal with these things. And I know I'm being criticized somewhat from the right and the left for paying the debt down. But we've got to keep this economy going. To do that, we've got to keep interest rates down and confidence sky high. And if you want businesses and individuals to be able to borrow more, then the Government should borrow less. And it will generally tend to be more efficient borrowing.

Number two, we've got to invest in education; we've got to expand health care; we've got to help families balance their roles at home and at work; and we've got to continue to stay in the forefront of science and technology and meeting the new security challenges of the 21st century, especially the challenges of terrorism and biological and chemical weapons. We have to do these things.

But it is within our grasp to shape a future that would have been undreamed of just a few years ago. I believe that the Democratic Party is the right party to lead this country. Even though it's flattering to see the Republicans sort of edging more and more toward our economic policy—I think that's a good thing. I think it would be a great thing for our country if we had a bipartisan economic policy. It's an important part of our national security in the 21st century.

But we still have radically different approaches to things like sensible efforts to keep guns out of the hands of criminals and away from children to matters like making educational opportunity real and available to all, matters like our obligation to make available the access to health care. We provided—because of the provision that Hillary

and I and others fought so hard for in the 1997 Balanced Budget Act, we got 2 million more children in poor working families with health insurance today than we had just 2 years ago—2 million more. I made a proposal—and we got funding already, you've already paid for this, you don't have to—we have funding already for 3 million more. But I think now if we bring those children's parents into the program, we could take care of 25 percent of the uninsured people in America and they're the 25 neediest percent.

The second fastest big group of people between the ages of 55 and 65 who leave the work force, lose their health care, aren't old enough for Medicare. And you'd be amazed how many people that I grew up with in Arkansas—we're all moving into this age group—who are affected by this. You're talking about a very large number of people. I think we ought to just buy them into Medicare—pay the cost, whatever the real cost is, give them a modest tax credit so it's more affordable.

These are big issues. We've got to keep people coming together, meeting these basic needs if we want to keep people focused on the future. People stop focusing on the future when they have to worry about how they're going to keep body and soul together or when they feel threatened.

So we have to keep the momentum up. And believe me, no matter what we do—and as I said, I would be elated if we wound up with a bipartisan consensus on our economic policy this year—there are going to be profound differences in our responsibilities to each other to build a strong society. And I cannot tell you how strongly I believe that a big part of our economic success has come because we were also doubling our investment in education and training and making it clear to ordinary people, through increases in the minimum wage, the Family and Medical Leave Act, things like this, that we cared about what happened to them, and we thought they ought to be a part of America's future.

So you stay with us. Stay with us as we try to pass the Patients' Bill of Rights and the other things we've got on the plate now. And tell people the story, that we had a set of ideas, we had a core philosophy, and it

has worked. And we do need to keep changing America, but we don't need to forget what brought us to this point; we need to build on it. With your help, we will.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:10 p.m. in the John Hay Room at the Hay Adams Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to John Merrigan, chair, Democratic Business Council.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Dinner

February 8, 2000

Thank you so much. I am delighted to be back in this wonderful, wonderful old house that contains a lot of good ghosts. I want to thank Jim and Joe for hosting this event. I thank all of you for coming. Joe, I want to thank you for having my mother out to the track. My mother was convinced that heaven was a racetrack—[laughter]—where she would not have to run. [Laughter] And I am delighted to be here with you today.

I want to thank all my friends from Maryland for being here, particularly Lieutenant Governor Kathleen Kennedy Townsend and Senator Miller, Speaker Taylor, party chair Wayne Rogers, and all the others who are here. Maryland has been very good to me, to Hillary and Al and Tipper Gore. It's been one of our best States in both '92 and '96, and also, thanks to truly outstanding leadership, a genuine laboratory for virtually every reform I have advocated for 7 years.

You know, one of the things that you have to constantly reconcile when you're President is, how do you apportion the President's time? And if I just—after a while, if I keep making announcements in the Rose Garden or in the Oval Office or in the White House, there's no picture there, or it's the same picture. So you want to go out, but you don't want to go too far, because otherwise you spend all day going to and from someplace, and you miss a day's work. Well, it was my great good fortune that I happened to be President at a time when Maryland was so superbly led that every good thing in America that was going on anywhere was also going on in Maryland. And I thank all of you for that.

I want to thank Ed Rendell and Joe Andrew and my longtime friend Andy Tobias for their willingness to come in and lead our party and try to get us through a very challenging election year, when we expect to be outspent but not outworked. And we know if we have enough money to get our message out, it won't matter if they have a little more. And I want to thank all of you for making them look a little more successful tonight. We're very grateful to you for that.

And I want to thank Donna Shalala for being here. She is the longest serving and, I believe, by far the most effective Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services. Today we dealt with one of Donna's issues. I went out to the American Academy of Sciences and signed the first Presidential Executive order of the 21st century, banning genetic discrimination in employment and insurance of Federal employees, and endorsing legislation introduced by Senator Daschle in the Senate and Congresswoman Louise Slaughter from New York in the House to ban genetic discrimination in employment and insurance practices for all employees.

I sort of would like to take that as a little metaphor. That's a future issue, and it's thrilling to me. Why do we even have to worry about that? Because in just a little bit, we'll have an entire map of the sequencing of the human genome. We already know that broken genes and what they look like—that are high predictors of breast cancer. The good news about that is, pretty soon we'll have diagnostic techniques that will either be able to head off the cancer ever developing, with gene therapies that block the destructive development or diagnose the cancer when it's just a few cells and not after it has, as it did to my mother and so many others, gone too far.

So we're thinking about this incredible tomorrow. Reminiscent of, I might say, my '92 campaign song, the old Fleetwood Mac song "Don't Stop Thinking About Tomorrow," we actually have the luxury of thinking about these things. And it seems well within reach.

I just today, I ran into the chairman of General Motors at a nonpolitical event—I don't want to get him roped into our business—anyway, but I complimented him on

the Detroit auto show and on the work that our administration has done under the leadership of the Vice President with the auto companies and the auto workers over the last 7 years in what we call the Partnership for a New Generation of Vehicles. We now have automobiles shown at the Detroit auto show—not small two-seaters; big, roomy four-seaters—that will get 70 to 80 or more miles a gallon, with fuel injection technology that also obviously dramatically reduces harmful emissions, including greenhouse gas emissions.

And we were talking about that, and I was explaining to him the work we're doing with scientists associated with the Department of Agriculture to increase the efficiency of creating ethanol or other fuels from biomass, not just corn but rice hulls, weeds, hay, anything. Right now, the real problem with that is that the conversion ratio is inefficient. And I don't want to get down into the weeds here, but I think you should understand it. [*Laughter*] In other words, the reason that it's a political issue—if you saw Iowa and you saw our candidates, the Vice President and Senator Bradley, arguing about who loved ethanol more—[*laughter*—the reason that's a political issue is that ethanol really is an environmental net plus, but costs more. And it's not a huge net plus yet; that is, it takes about 7 gallons of gasoline to produce 8 gallons of ethanol.

The scientists there are working on the same sort of chemical discovery that led to the conversion of crude oil and gasoline. When that happens, they estimate that we'll be able to make 8 gallons of ethanol with one gallon of gasoline. And when you put that with a 70-mile-a-gallon car, you're getting 500 miles to the gallon of gasoline, and the whole future of the planet is changed. The whole future of our ability to deal with climate change and global warming is changed. Everything will change.

So we're dealing with all these real exciting things. And I think that's very good. But what I want to say to you, which has already been said by previous speakers, starting with Mayor Rendell, is the framework within which we will really, seriously pursue these great opportunities will be set by how the American people vote or, if they stay home,

how they don't vote in the 2000 elections: Who will be President; who will be in the Senate; who will be in the House; who will be the Governor; what will be the shape of our decision? And it is a hugely important election.

I have spent the last 7 years trying to turn this country around, away from the difficult circumstances we face and the sort of defeatism and political gridlock and negative attitudes about Government that existed at that time. And we are on a roll. But what I want to say to you is, one of the most dangerous times for a great people can be when we're on a roll. Anybody in this room tonight who is over 30 years old can recall at least one time in your life when you got in trouble because you thought things were going so well that it didn't matter whether you concentrated or whether you worked, whether you took on a big challenge you had been meaning to take on; you could just sort of indulge yourself in the moment; there were really no consequences; everything's rocking along fine.

And what I want to say to you is, even though I'm immensely proud of the record that the Vice President and Hillary and Tipper and I, Donna Shalala, our whole administration has been a part of establishing, the whole purpose of it was to bring us to this moment so we could really deal with the big challenges of America in the new century. And a time like this maybe comes along once in a lifetime. And if people make the wrong decisions, or events intervene before they grab hold of their potential, everything can change.

So it really matters whether you have someone who is committed to maintaining our prosperity and bringing economic opportunity to poor people, poor places that haven't had it.

It really matters that—whether we elect people who understand that there are enormous pressures on working parents today to fulfill their responsibilities to their children and their responsibilities at work. And of all the advanced countries in the world, of all the things we do well, we do that less well than nearly any other place. We need to do more to help people succeed at home and at work.

It really matters whether, now that we've gotten the crime rate down for 7 years in a row, we have someone as President and in the Congress who believes we can make America the safest big country in the world and is willing to keep working to keep guns out of the hands of criminals and away from children.

It matters whether we have someone who believes we can grow the economy and improve the environment. It matters whether we have someone who is committed to keeping America on the forefront of science and technology and to do it in a way that preserves our values by protecting our privacy. These things matter.

And if I might say, two things that we have done which were really different—quite apart from the fact that we had a specific economic policy, a specific crime policy, a specific welfare policy—they were different from previous administrations: We said, “We don’t believe Government is the enemy anymore; we tried that for 12 years and it got us in one big ditch. But we don’t believe Government is the solution to all our problems. We favor a Government of empowerment and enterprise that establishes the conditions and gives people the tools to solve their own problems.” In other words, we had a positive and unifying notion of what our Government could be.

The second thing was that we said, “We don’t want to demonize our opponents anymore, and we don’t want them demonizing us.” We are—we think the biggest problem in the world is that people are still unable to get along with those who are different from them. And they turn their differences into demonization, principally in racial, in religious, tribal ways, religious ways in the United States, in terms of hate crimes and all those ways and also against people because they’re gay and in this town because people are of different political parties or have different philosophies. Differences of opinion are good; demonization is bad. Our administration knew the difference, and it has made a difference all over the world.

So now, we come to this moment in this house, so I want to tell you a story. It was my great good fortune to be friends with Averell Harriman and with Pamela

Harriman. When she died at 77 in Paris by a swimming pool, she was our Ambassador to France, where she had gone as a young woman after World War II. When he was almost 90, I was spending the night with him one night in the residence next door. And he actually got up—Hillary was there, too—and he got up at 11:45 p.m.—he had already gone to bed—because we were up talking, and he was jealous that we were still up talking. He was 89 years old. So we got him into a conversation about what it was like representing President Roosevelt with Churchill and Stalin. And then, about that time, they also had hired a professor at Georgetown to work with Governor Harriman who had taught me international affairs when I was a student there. So this house has a lot of history to me.

I’d like you to think about this. You’ve talked about the first time I was around here was when I was in college, the last time we had an economic expansion this robust—that is, the one we just lapped—we just lapped the economic expansion from 1961 to 1969. When I graduated from high school in 1964, President Kennedy had been killed. But the country really had—contrary to all these people who now look back and say that’s the beginning of America’s long drift into cynicism—that’s not true. The American people were heartbroken, but they united as I have never seen them, and they tried to rise above it. And they tried to support President Johnson, and they got—there was a whole new energy behind the civil rights movement and all the things we believe in.

So when I finished high school in ’64, we had 3 percent unemployment, big growth, no inflation. Everybody thought we were going to be able to legally resolve our civil rights challenges through the Congress; we’d all do it in a peaceful, positive way. Vietnam was a distant place that we thought would be managed some way or another, and we knew we were standing up against communism. It was the right thing to do.

Four years later, when I graduated from Georgetown, in my last semester, Martin Luther King was killed; Senator Kennedy was killed; President Johnson announced he wouldn’t run for reelection; Washington burned; and a politically divisive message

called the Silent Majority, but really—the first time, getting into America—“America is divided between us and them,” carried the day.

I want you to know something. I'm not running for anything, but as an American, I have waited more than 30 years for my country once again to be in the position that we lost because of the tragedies that happened in 1968, because of the riots in the streets, because of the breakdown of the economy, because we squandered our moment. And every one of you that's anywhere near my age who was moved to believe that we could make a difference by the heroes we lost 30 years ago, you must believe that this election—not '92, not '96—this election is the moment when America is back where we were when we lost our way.

Most people don't get a second chance in life as a people. And most of us who are still here are here only because we did get a few second chances. America cannot let this go. That's why you ought to be here and be here for our crowd all the way to November. And if somebody asks you why you're doing it, you tell them what I just told you: This is the chance of a lifetime, and we better make the most of it.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:29 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to James D'Orta and Joseph A. DeFrancis, dinner hosts; Speaker Casper R. Taylor, Jr., Maryland House of Delegates; Wayne L. Rogers, chairman, Maryland Democratic Party; and Edward G. Rendell, general chair, Joseph J. Andrew, national chair, and Andrew Tobias, treasurer, Democratic National Committee. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks on Departure for McAllen, Texas, and an Exchange With Reporters

February 9, 2000

Patients' Bill of Rights

The President. Good morning. Before I leave, I'd like to say just a few words about the Patients' Bill of Rights legislation. A House and Senate conference will take it up beginning tomorrow. My message is simple

and straightforward. Congress should seize this moment of opportunity to do what is right for the health of the American family, to seize this moment to stand with doctors, nurses, and patients, to restore trust and accountability in our health care system.

Last fall the House of Representatives passed by a large margin a strong, enforceable Patients' Bill of Rights. The legislation, sponsored by Congressmen Norwood and Dingell, says you have a right to the nearest emergency room care, the right to see a specialist, the right to know you can't be forced to switch doctors in the middle of treatment, the right to hold your health care plan accountable if it causes you or a loved one great harm, and it covers all Americans in all health plans.

Now this bill is in the hands of House and Senate conferees. It reflects the beliefs and represents the needs of the overwhelming majority of the American people without regard to party. It has the endorsement of over 300 health care and consumer groups. It has the votes of 275 Members of the House of Representatives, including 68 Republicans. Although I remain concerned that the conferees on the bill do not share the majority's view, I believe, nevertheless, they have a clear responsibility to ratify these fundamental rights, to put politics aside and pass a strong, enforceable Patients' Bill of Rights.

Americans who are battling illnesses shouldn't have to battle insurance companies for the coverage they need. Passing a real Patients' Bill of Rights for all Americans in all health plans is a crucial step toward meeting our goal in the 21st century of assuring quality, affordable health care to all our citizens. I ask the House and Senate conferees to take the next vital step.

Thank you.

Middle East Peace Process

Q. Mr. President, what are you doing about the daily bombing of Lebanon?

The President. Well, let me say, we are doing our best to get the peace process back on track. I think it is clear that the bombing is a reaction to the deaths, in two separate instances, of Israeli soldiers. What we need to do is to stop the violence and start the peace process again. We're doing our best

to get it started. And we're working very, very hard on it.

Disruption on the Internet

Q. Mr. President, are you monitoring the situation with the hackers who have been disrupting some of the main websites around the country the past few days? Are you monitoring that situation? Is there anything that Washington could possibly do about this?

The President. I don't know the answer to that. But I have asked people who know more about it than I do whether there is anything we can do about it.

Patients' Bill of Rights

Q. Mr. President, on the Patients' Bill of Rights, Republicans are considering adding the right to sue in Federal court, just not district court, would that be sufficient, sir, in your opinion?

Q. I couldn't hear that question.

The President. I honestly don't know the answer to that because I haven't ever considered it, and I haven't discussed it. I'd like to have a chance to discuss it. I think any indication that there is movement and that they're trying to get together is hopeful. But I don't want to commit to something I'm not sure I understand the full implications of yet.

Possible Visit to Pakistan

Q. Have you decided whether to go to Pakistan yet?

The President. We haven't made a decision on the final itinerary yet. I want to make a trip which maximizes the possibilities, not only for constructive partnerships for the United States in the years ahead but, even more urgently, for peace in that troubled part of the world. It has enormous implications for people in the United States and throughout the world, more I suspect, than most people know. I hope in the time that I have here that we can make some progress because it is something that I remain profoundly concerned about for years and years into the future.

Northern Ireland Peace Process

Q. Any telephone calls from Northern Ireland—[inaudible]—can you give us an update, sir?

The President. Well, it's correct that we're working very hard on it. I have some hope that we may find a way through this which would enable every aspect of the Good Friday accord to be realized. That's after all, what the people of Northern Ireland voted for overwhelmingly and that could achieve that objective without interrupting the progress so far.

But I have nothing else to report to you except to say that I'm working very hard; the British and Irish Governments are; and I think that the leaders of all the political factions are. I think everyone understands that we're at a very important moment, and we're trying to keep it going. And we have a chance. And I just hope everyone will—everyone—will belly up to the bar and do their part so that we don't have any kind of backsliding or reversal here. We've come too far.

I was quite encouraged that there was universal condemnation of the explosion in Northern Ireland last week. That's a good first step. We just need to keep at it.

Thank you.

Patients' Bill of Rights

Q. Is the law suit provision still the major stumbling block, at least with the Senate negotiators there in terms of the Patients' Bill of Rights? You may have asked that, but I couldn't hear.

The President. He did in a different way. I think so. You're following it so you know there are a few other differences of opinion, but we want universal—first we want to cover all Americans, that's a very important thing. And there has to be some way of enforcing a right, or it's not a right. Otherwise it's just a suggestion.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:46 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Luncheon in McAllen

February 9, 2000

Thank you very much. I want to say, first of all, how very grateful I am to Jesus and Elvia for having us in their beautiful home;

to Alonzo Cantu and, of course, to my good friend Congressman Hinojosa.

I thought it was interesting that he quoted that line from "Casablanca"—[laughter]—my second favorite movie of all time. I like you very much, but I must say I've never thought of you in the same breath as Ingrid Bergman before. [Laughter] I'll have to think about that one.

Let me say to all of you, I—Ben talked about how I have been here, now I guess three times since I've been President. It isn't a hard sell. If it were up to me, I'd come once a month. If you've been following the weather between Washington and New York, where I'm spending most of my time now, you know that it's a little better down here. I saw the first golf course without snow on it I've seen in 3 weeks, today coming in from the airport.

I will be brief because I want to get around and visit with all of you and then speak about what you wish to speak about, but I would like to make a couple of general points. First of all, I came to the valley and to McAllen on the last night of my campaign in 1992; some of you were there. We had a marvelous 24-hour affair. We stopped in nine different communities, and I really wanted to come here. And I said then I wanted the American people to give me a chance to put the people of this country first again over the politics of Washington, which was, I thought, entirely too divisive and too mired in the past. And we brought a new philosophy to try to bring the people together, to try to change the way Government works to empower people to solve their own problems, to try to bring opportunity to every responsible citizen, and to make a genuine attempt to build a community of all Americans, and our country is growing increasingly diverse with every passing day. In just a decade, for example, there will be no majority race in the entire State of California, our biggest State.

So all these things are important. We talked about how we sent people from the Government down here to try to help. I think that's important. I think if we're going to have one America, we can't pretend that we're building one if we only go to the largest places or to the wealthiest places or to the places with the most influence or even to the

places where I won the electoral votes. We have to try to bring everybody into the family of America and go forward.

In 1992, when I stopped here, we had high unemployment. Today, we have the longest economic expansion in history and the lowest unemployment rate in 30 years, and the lowest Hispanic- and African-American unemployment rates ever recorded.

We had a great deal of social division in terms of race and income and other ways, and a lot of social problems. Today, we have the lowest welfare rolls in 30 years, almost 7 million fewer people on welfare, 2 million-plus children lifted out of poverty, the lowest crime rates in 30 years, the lowest poverty rates in over 20 years. The college-going rate is up by about 10 percent. And we've put empowerment zones all across America, including one in south Texas, to try to give people a better chance to be a part of this new enterprise economy.

So the country, in general, is in the best shape perhaps it's ever been. And the great question in this election season, which I think I can comment on because for the first time in over two decades I'm not on a ballot anywhere, is after we have done all this work to turn our country around, to get it moving in the right direction, what are we going to do with this opportunity?

And all of you can remember times in your own life—at least all of you that are over 30—when you made a mistake because you thought things were going so well there were no consequences to breaking your concentration, to not thinking ahead, to putting off the tough decisions that you knew were out there. That's the great challenge to America today: How are we going to make the most of what is truly a magic moment in our Nation's history?

And as I argued a little more than a week ago in the State of the Union Address, I think the only thing to do is to keep pushing ahead, to bear down, to keep changing along the lines that have brought us this far; to ask ourselves what are the big challenges still out there, and do our best to meet them. And I just want to emphasize, if I might very briefly, six of those that I think have particular impact on the people of the Rio Grande Valley.

First of all, the number of people over 65 will double in the next 30 years, and we have to be prepared for that. That means we have to save Social Security; we have to strengthen Medicare; and we ought to add a prescription drug benefit that our seniors can buy at a price they can afford, because over 60 percent of the seniors in America today cannot afford the prescription drugs they need to lengthen and improve the quality of their lives.

Secondly, we have to realize that only in one respect has our social fabric been more strained since 1993: There are more people without health insurance today than there were in 1993. I remember when all the interest groups were arrayed against me and the First Lady when we tried to provide health care coverage for all. They told all those Congressmen that if they voted for my health care plan, the number of uninsured people would go up. Well, every Congressman who voted for it can say "That's right. I voted for Clinton's plan. It didn't pass, and the number of uninsured people went up."

So I'm trying to do something about that. In 1997 we passed the Children's Health Insurance Program. And we got it off the ground, and it was a little slow starting. But last year we doubled the number of people in CHIP, and there are now 2 million children who have health insurance. But there are 3 million more who are eligible, and what I want you to understand—a lot of them are in the Rio Grande Valley—and the thing I want to emphasize is, we appropriated the money, the money is there, and we have to get these children enrolled.

And I also asked the Congress this year to cover the parents of these children, almost all of them working people but on very limited incomes. Cover them. If we covered the parents and children that are income-eligible for the health insurance program for children, we could literally cover 25 percent of all the uninsured people in the United States, and they're the 25 percent that need the coverage the worst. So I ask you to help me pass that.

In addition to that—and I'll bet there are a lot of these people in the valley, as well—the fastest growing group of people without health insurance are people between the ages

of 55 and 65 who take early retirement or change jobs, and their new job doesn't have health insurance for people their age, or they take early retirement, and they don't have any health insurance until they're old enough to get on Medicare.

I have proposed to let them buy into Medicare and to give them a tax credit to make it affordable. This will not in any way weaken Medicare. If anything, it will strengthen Medicare, because we're not taking money out of the Medicare Trust Fund. But if you think about the hundreds and hundreds of thousands of people out there today who are, because they're in an age group that I'm rapidly approaching, are not exactly attractive for insurance but are, on average, healthier than people over 65, we need to provide some way for them to get health care and for the health care providers to be reimbursed if they give them health care. And the simplest, easiest thing is to let them buy into the Medicare program.

Let me say a word about education. In the country as a whole, test scores are up; high school graduation rates are up; college-going rates are up. That's the good news. The bad news is there is still a differential in the high school dropout rate that is breathtaking between Hispanic-Americans and the rest of America. And the dropout rate from college, once people go, is very high.

So I have proposed a budget that puts a billion dollars more into Head Start, the biggest increase in a generation, that would provide after-school programs and summer school programs in every troubled school in America where there's a high dropout rate, and we know that makes a big difference. And we passed in '97 the HOPE scholarship, which gives a \$1,500 tax credit for people for the first 2 years of college, and further tax relief for later years, which has effectively opened the doors of college to all Americans, at least to community college.

I have asked the Congress to add to that a tax deduction for up to \$10,000 of college tuition and to make it at the 28 percent rate, even for people in the 15 percent income tax bracket. That would effectively open the doors of 4 years of college to every person in this country. It could change the future

of the Rio Grande Valley. And I hope you will help me pass that in this coming session.

I also have made proposals that would enable us to have the funds to help prepare 5,000 schools every year and to do major repairs or build 6,000 more schools. We have a lot of kids that are in overcrowded classrooms, a lot of kids that are in classrooms so broken down they can't even be wired for the Internet. So I hope you will support the education agenda.

In the area of families, I believe that one of the biggest unresolved problems we have today, or just daily challenges, is the challenge that families face when they have to work, particularly when both parents work or when there's a single-parent household and they have children, school-aged children, or even preschool children.

So I recommended an expansion in the child care tax credit. I recommended making it refundable for low income people who sometimes spend as much as 25 percent of their income on child care. I recommended a \$3,000 tax credit—that's \$3,000 off your tax bill—to pay for the long-term care costs of people who are caring for elderly or disabled relatives. I think that is a very important thing, and I hope the Congress will finally agree to go on and raise the minimum wage.

The last point I want to make on families and health care is what I made today—we have finally gotten a conference to begin tomorrow on the Patients' Bill of Rights, which I think is very important, to guarantee people the right to see a specialist, the right not to lose their health care coverage, or to be required to change doctors in the middle of a treatment, a pregnancy or a cancer treatment, for example. And I think it's important that we pass that.

The last economic point I want to make is that we now have an opportunity that we didn't have in '92, and that is to focus even more sharply on the people and the communities who are still mired in poverty and a high unemployment rate, the people who have not fully participated in this economic recovery.

Now, the empowerment zone program, which is very well known in south Texas because of the leadership of the Vice Presi-

dent—we've had our big, national empowerment zone conference down here in the valley not very long ago last year. But I think it's time to both increase the number of these zones and increase the financial incentives to invest in them. I know you want to get high-tech business in here.

You know, if there is some extra risk or some extra cost by going further away, we ought to help to defray that, because we will never have a better opportunity—ever—to prove what I believe: that we can bring free enterprise to people and places that have been left behind and that this is a way not only to help the people in those categories, the high unemployment areas in south Texas, this is a way to keep the American economic expansion going with no inflation, because we'll be adding new businesses, new workers, new taxpayers, and new consumers all at the same time.

I'm also, as I'm sure you've noticed from the emphasis I've given it for the last year or so, trying to get Congress to pass sweeping legislation that would cover every area of high unemployment in the country, to give people the same incentives to invest to bring new businesses to these areas we now give people to invest to bring new businesses to South America or Asia or Africa. I'm not against helping poor countries overseas. I just think we ought to have the same incentives to invest in poor areas here at home in America. I hope you'll help me pass that new markets legislation.

One big part of that that I'm going to emphasize in a couple of months is closing the so-called digital divide, which would really be helped if you were able to recruit some high-tech companies down here and train people to work in them. Because one thing we know is that when people have access to computers, not just children in the schools but their parents at home or in a community center, and I've proposed establishing a thousand of them across America to give all adults access to the Internet, we know that innovative people find new ways to improve their lot in life.

For example, probably some of you here have bought or sold something on the website eBay, which is a great trading center. There are now over 20,000 Americans, many

of whom were once on welfare, who are now actually making a living—it's their full-time job trading on eBay. No one would have ever thought of this as a possible opportunity for poor people, as a way to create small businesses.

I've established all these community development financial institutions around the country since I've been President. We're making a lot of microcredit loans. Think about that. Think about being able to loan somebody enough money just to buy a computer with good capacity. They could be fully connected to the Internet, and they figure out how to make their own living. There are all kinds of options out there, and we ought to leave no stone unturned in trying to get at the heart of this poverty problem and empower every person who has not yet been a part of this prosperity to do well.

Now, here's the last point I want to make. If you were to ask me to put in a sentence what has been behind the change I tried to bring to America the last 7 years, what is behind the philosophy that governs everything I do, it is my belief that everyone counts and everyone ought to have a chance, and we all do better when we help each other, that we really have to build one America, and that the Government isn't the source or the solution to all the problems but is an absolutely imperative partner. We have to create conditions and empower people to make the most of their own lives.

And in that connection, I have to tell you that one of the things that continues to bother me in my efforts to build one America is the problem that I continue to have in the United States Senate in getting judges confirmed—you want to talk to me about judges—particularly judges who come from diverse backgrounds. And there's always a political element in the appointment of judges, and sometimes when the President is of one party and the Senate is of another party, they don't confirm as many of the President's appointees. But there has never been an example like what we've seen of the deliberate slow walk and refusal to have hearings, refusal to vote up or down on judges.

I appointed an El Paso lawyer named Enrique Moreno to serve on the fifth circuit. He graduated from Harvard and Harvard Law School. He'd come a long way from El Paso. The American Bar Association said he was well-qualified to be a judge. I had the highest percentage of judges recommended well-qualified by the ABA of any President since they've been doing the ratings, even though I've appointed more Hispanic, more African-Americans, more female, and a more diverse judiciary in history. And everybody concedes they're less political than my two predecessors. They just show up for work, by and large, and do their job. And I cannot even get a hearing because your Senators won't support it.

I have appointed—I nominated a judge named Julio Fuentes for the third circuit and Richard Paez in California. They're supposed to give me a vote on him in March, but that's another thing I wish you would communicate, particularly if you're not a lawyer. You could have more influence in a way if you're not a lawyer. Tell your Senators that when the President appoints a person who worked himself all the way through Harvard Law School out of El Paso, and the ABA says he's well-qualified, and Texas needs the judge, give the man a hearing, and give him a vote. And if they're not for him, have the courage to vote against him. Don't keep killing these things.

I keep telling people in Washington, "We can do our business. We can show up for work. We can make progress, and we can still have elections. There will still be things we honestly disagree about. But we owe it to the American people, without regard to our party or our philosophy, to believe that everybody counts, everybody ought to have a chance, and we'll all do better when we help each other."

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:05 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to Jesus and Elvia Saenz, luncheon hosts; and Alonzo Cantu, member, board of directors, Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute.

Remarks at a Luncheon Honoring Representative Ruben Hinojosa in McAllen

February 9, 2000

Thank you so much. Well, Congressman, I'm afraid now that this meeting has been opened to the press, if the list you just read is widely published, every other Member of Congress will be angry at me for not doing as well. *[Laughter]* I want to say a special thanks to your Congressman Ruben Hinojosa and Marty, and a happy birthday to his little daughter, Karen. He has really done a wonderful job for you. And he makes it easy to be helpful.

I want to thank Zeke and Livia Reyna for their cohosting this event. And I want to thank Alonzo and Yoli for having me back in their beautiful little home here. *[Laughter]* I want you to know I agreed to come to south Texas—the first time I wanted to come to the valley before I had seen this place. So the first time I came out of the goodness of my heart. The second time I came because I wanted to come to this place again. *[Laughter]*

This is my third trip to the valley as President. And as the Congressman said, the Vice President has been here twice; Hillary was here recently; for all of you who were here I want to thank you, and thank you for giving her such a good hand. We had a great send-off on Sunday when she formally declared her campaign. And I think she's doing very well. I talked to her today, and if you can measure how well you're doing by how hard they attack you, which I've always thought was a pretty good measure—*[laughter]*—she's a cinch.

So I wanted to say to all of you seriously, there are many friends I have in this crowd today—the country judges, Senator Truan, others—that I have known for a long time. I first came to south Texas and then to the Rio Grande Valley, where I literally fell in love with this place almost 30 years ago now, before a lot of you in this crowd were even born. When I was a very young man, I realized that special quality of the people here, the special quality of the community. And I always thought if I ever had a chance to help, I would do it. You have given me a

chance to help, and it's been an honor to do so.

I just want to say a few words as the only politician you'll hear from this year who is not running for anything. *[Laughter]* I want to talk to you not just as a President but as a citizen of this country. When I came here to this community on the last night of my campaign in 1992, some of you were there, and there was a great feeling of excitement. And we had a huge voter turnout the next day, and the Vice President and I were given a strong victory and a mandate to go in and change the direction of our country. We said then, we wanted to put the American people first, not Washington politics. We wanted opportunity for every responsible citizen. We wanted a community of all Americans, and we believed that Government was not the problem or the solution, but Government belonged to the people, and it was the job of Government to create the conditions and give people the tools that they need to solve their own problems and live their own dreams. And we've worked hard on that for 7 years now.

When I was here on that night in 1992, we had a stagnant economy and high unemployment. Today, we have the longest economic expansion in history, the lowest unemployment rate in 30 years, the lowest Hispanic- and African-American unemployment rates ever recorded, and the lowest poverty rates in more than 20 years, the lowest female unemployment rate in over 40 years. We have tried to do what we said we would do.

Our society was deeply divided. There was a riot in Los Angeles that year and great discontent everywhere. Today, we have the lowest crime rates in 30 years, the lowest welfare rolls in 30 years, over 2 million children lifted out of poverty, almost 7 million people off the welfare rolls. We have created empowerment zones around the country in places like the Rio Grande Valley to give people the chance to attract economic investment. The college-going rate is up by about 10 percent. The country is moving in the right direction.

And as I said, as the person you'll hear from this year who is not running for office, the great question that the American people have to answer when they vote for Congress,

for Senator, for President, is: Now, what? Now, what? What are we going to do with this truly magic moment? Every person in this audience today who is over 30 years old can remember some time in your life when you made a mistake because you thought things were going so well, you didn't have to think; you didn't have to work; you didn't have to plan; and there was no consequence for slacking up.

Every person here who has lived long enough can remember when you made a personal, a family, or a business mistake because things seemed to be so good that you really didn't have to do what we should all be doing every day with our lives, trying to get better, trying to do more, trying always to think about tomorrow.

Now, what I want to say to you is the last time America had these conditions was in the longest economic expansion in history before this one, between 1961 and 1969. When I graduated from high school in 1964, we had high growth, low unemployment; we were on the way to passing civil rights legislation; everybody thought we would be able to resolve a lot of those difficult issues in the Congress in debate. The country had been heartbroken by President Kennedy's assassination, but we had united behind President Johnson, and he had done a masterful job of leading us and trying to pass legislation through the Congress, and everybody thought it was going to go on forever.

Within 4 years, we had riots in the streets; the country was deeply divided over Vietnam; President Johnson announced he wouldn't run for reelection; and Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy were killed. And in the Presidential election of 1968, a deeply troubled and divided people voted for someone who said he represented the silent majority, which is another way of saying, this country is divided between us and them. I'm with us, and you don't want them.

And we have labored under that for 30 years. And for 7 years, I've been trying to turn this around. And I feel now, the country is moving in the right direction. But I want to tell you this: I'm not running for anything. As an American, I have been waiting for more than 30 years for my country to have the ability for all of us to join together hand

in hand and build the future of our dreams for our children. That's what this is about. And we dare not blow this opportunity.

You know, some people in life don't get a second chance, and those of us who do have to be grateful for it. Now, our whole country has been given a second chance, under even better conditions than existed more than 30 years ago before all the wheels ran off.

So I say to you, when I come down here and talk to people about how we can make the Rio Grande Valley an oasis of opportunity, to me that's part of the long-term challenge of America. We should look at every place in America where there is too much poverty and too much unemployment and say, "If we can't bring economic opportunity to these places now, when will we ever be able to do it?"

So every place in America that has not fully participated in this recovery should have dramatic incentives for people to invest there, to create jobs there, to put people to work there, to give people a chance to live their dreams there. Every place in America and all the people in America that don't have access to health care—we should do more to provide more people access to health care, until everybody has it.

That's why I said in the State of the Union I wanted to see another 3 million children enrolled in our health insurance program and over 5 million parents included in it. I want people, who are over 55 but not old enough to be on Medicare, who lose their health insurance, to be able to buy into Medicare. And I think they ought to have a tax credit so they can afford to do it, because we have to keep moving forward in health care. We have to keep moving forward in education. That's why I asked the Congress to put another billion dollars in Head Start and to provide enough funds for every troubled school in this country to give after-school or summer school programs to the kids who need it. That's why I want the Congress to provide enough money to repair 5,000 schools a year for the next 5 years and to build and modernize 6,000 more so all of our kids will have a chance to get a world-class education.

And that's why I have worked so hard to help people balance the demands of raising their children and doing their work. That's

why I want to increase the child care tax credit, why I want to pass an increase in the minimum wage, why I want to give families a \$3,000 tax credit to care for an aging parent or a disabled member of the family—one of the biggest problems in America today—why I think we ought to be proud of the fact that we've opened at least 2 years of college to everybody with these HOPE scholarship tax credits. But I have asked the Congress to give the American people a tax deduction for college tuition at a 28 percent rate, even if you're in the 15 percent income tax bracket, up to \$10,000. That would guarantee that everybody in America could afford to go to 4 years of college if they did the work and learned the things they need to learn to go.

These are important things that will bring us together. Now, let me just say one thing in closing. If you asked me to summarize what it is we did that was different over the last 7 years that worked, I could talk about our economic policy, which was different. We got rid of the deficit, and now I want to pay us out of debt for the first time since 1835, and if we do that, all the kids here will have low interest rates and a strong economy. We had a different welfare reform policy. We said, "Able-bodied people have to work, but we're going to take care of the kids. We're not going to punish them." We had a different crime policy. We said we ought to take—put more police on the street and take guns out of the hands of criminals.

But the most important thing we did was to say, "We've got a different philosophy. We don't want to divide the American people anymore. We believe everybody counts; everybody should have a chance; we'll all do better individually if we try to help each other do better together."

So if someone came to me tonight and said, "I am the angel sent from the good Lord, and even though you're having a good time being President, you can't finish your term. This is your last day, but I'll be a genie, you can have one wish," it would not be for all the things I talked to you about. It would be to create one America. It would be to create a climate in America where we genuinely respected one another, where we were genuinely committed to giving one another a chance.

I see our former attorney general, Mr. Morales, back there. Is there life after politics, Dan? [*Laughter*] I hope that in my lifetime we will see a Hispanic-American Governor of Texas, President of the United States, on the Supreme Court, doing all these things. I hope that will be true of all the ethnic groups that are coming into our country and enriching us.

But more important than that, even, I hope that all of our children will have a chance to define and live their dreams, whatever they are. Your Congressman is an unbelievably effective public servant. And it's not just because he can worry me to death until I finally say yes; it's because he proceeds from the right philosophy. Everybody counts. Everybody should have a chance. We'll all do better when we help each other. It's worked pretty well for America.

I just want to ask you from the bottom of my heart—you know how I feel about Vice President Gore, you know what he's done here in the empowerment zone and other things—but the main thing I want you to think about, for all of us, what happens to us individually is not as important as the direction the country takes. And I have fought very, very hard to keep the poison and the division and the animosity and the Washington political games to a minimum in terms of their ability to impact you and interfere with what we were all trying to do together.

Now it's up to you again. And all these elections, from the Presidency to the Senate and Congress races, the governorships, all these elections, they're like giant job interviews. And you have to decide not only who to hire but what are they going to do. And just remember, as they used to tell me when I was a kid growing up in Arkansas: When you see a turtle on a fencepost, chances are it didn't get there by accident. [*Laughter*]

Here we are. It didn't happen by accident. And we will never forgive ourselves if we blow this opportunity. So instead of relaxing, we should bear down and lift our sights and open our hearts and hands and make this election a time when we seize our deepest, fondest hopes and our biggest dreams for our children.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:35 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to Representative Hinojosa's wife, Martha Lopez Hinojosa, and their daughter Karen; Zeke and Livia Reyna and Alonzo and Yoli Cantu, luncheon hosts; Texas State Senator Carlos Truan; and former Texas State Attorney General Dan Morales.

**Message to the Congress
Transmitting a Report on the
Extension of Normal Trade
Relations Status With Albania**

February 9, 2000

To the Congress of the United States:

I am submitting an updated report to the Congress concerning the emigration laws and policies of Albania. The report indicates continued Albanian compliance with U.S. and international standards in the area of emigration. In fact, Albania has imposed no emigration restrictions, including exit visa requirements, on its population since 1991.

On December 5, 1997, I determined and reported to the Congress that Albania was not in violation of paragraphs (1), (2), or (3) of subsection 402(a) of the Trade Act of 1974 or paragraphs (1), (2), or (3) of subsection 409(a) of that Act. That action allowed for the continuation of normal trade relations (NTR) status for Albania and certain other activities without the requirement of an annual waiver. This semiannual report is submitted as required by law pursuant to the determination of December 5, 1997.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
February 9, 2000.

**Message to Congress Reporting on
Rescissions and Deferrals**

February 9, 2000

To the Congress of the United States:

In accordance with the Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974, I herewith report three rescissions of budget authority, totaling \$128 million, and two deferrals of budget authority, totaling \$1.6 million.

The proposed rescissions affect the programs of the Department of Energy and the Department of Housing and Urban Development. The proposed deferrals affect programs of the Department of State and International Assistance Programs.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
February 9, 2000.

**Message to the Senate Transmitting
the Rotterdam Convention on the
Prior Informed Consent Procedure
for Certain Hazardous Chemicals
and Pesticides in International Trade
With Annexes**

February 9, 2000

To the Senate of the United States:

I transmit herewith, for the advice and consent of the Senate to ratification, the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade, with Annexes, done at Rotterdam, September 10, 1998. The report of the Department of State is enclosed for the information of the Senate.

The Convention, which was negotiated under the auspices of the United Nations Environment Program and the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, with the active participation of the United States, provides a significant and valuable international tool to promote sound risk-based decision-making in the trade of certain hazardous chemicals. Building on a successful voluntary procedure, the Convention requires Parties to exchange information about these chemicals, to communicate national decisions about their import, and to require that exports from their territories comply with the import decisions of other Parties.

The United States, with the assistance and cooperation of industry and nongovernmental organization, plays an important international leadership role in the safe management of hazardous chemicals and pesticides. This Convention, which assists developing countries in evaluating risks and enforcing their regulatory decisions regarding

trade in such chemicals, advances and promotes U.S. objectives in this regard. All relevant Federal agencies support early ratification of the Convention for this reason, and we understand that the affected industries and interest groups share this view.

I recommend that the Senate give early and favorable consideration to the Convention and give its advice and consent to ratification, subject to the understanding described in the accompanying report of the Secretary of State.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
February 9, 2000.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Dinner in Dallas, Texas
February 9, 2000

Thank you. First of all, Fred, thank you for what you said, and I thank you and Lisa for being wonderful friends to me and Hillary and to Al and Tipper Gore and to our party. I thank Jess and Betty Jo for being here tonight. I can't help but say, Betty Jo is the niece of former Speaker Carl Albert, who passed away in the last couple of days, a great Democrat. And I had a wonderful talk with his wife today, and it reminded me of why I have been a Democrat all my life. And our thoughts and prayers are with your family.

I thank "B" and Audre Rapoport and Garry Mauro for their work here. And I wanted to acknowledge not only the mayor, who I think has done a superb job, and Senator Cain, thank you for being here, and Sally, thank you for being here and for being our regional Department of Education person, for all the good work you do. But I also want to introduce a former very important person on my White House staff, Regina Montoya, who is now a candidate for the House, who is here. I want you all to help her get elected to Congress. We need to win this seat. *[Applause]* Thank you. She's here, I think.

I got tickled—I started laughing all over again when Ed Rendell was up here talking about the rap that the Republican chairman laid on him after the New Hampshire primary. He said, we were the candidate of spe-

cial interests, and he mentioned—what did he say—trial lawyers, labor, gays, and Hollywood. *[Laughter]*

Let me take you back to 1992. In 1991, I was having the time of my life living in Arkansas in the 11th year of my governorship. I had had a new lease on life. I loved my job. I could have done it now to kingdom come. But I was really worried about my country, because that's the kind of stuff that everybody in Washington said, what Ed just said. And there was a Republican line and a Democratic line. There was a liberal line and a Republican line. And everybody was struggling to be politically correct and to be as confrontational as possible, because that is the only way you would get your 15 seconds on the evening news.

I suppose it was perfectly good for the people who got on the talk shows all the time and the people who could raise funds for their reelection and stay in, but the country was in the ditch. Even when we were nominally in a recovery, we couldn't generate any jobs. And we had quadrupled the debt in 12 years, and we didn't have much to show for it, because we were spending less in real terms on things that we needed, like education.

The reason I ran for President is that I had been working on all this stuff for a long time, and it became clear to me there were limits to what any Governor or any people could do, or people in their private lives could do to turn America around until we had a National Government that had it right—that had the right philosophy that was dynamic and change-oriented and was interested in bringing people together and was committed to creating the conditions and giving people the tools to succeed in a very different world.

So I admit that what the chairman of the Republican Party said is right, but I don't think he got it right. That is, I'm not ashamed of the fact we've got a lot of trial lawyers here. I'm not ashamed of the fact that I think, if people have been shafted, they ought to be able to go to court and pursue their remedy. I also want to say this: I'm also proud of the fact that we've had a real relationship. This has not been a political deal. We haven't 100 percent agreed on everything. We've had

a relationship. It's like being in a family or an organization or anything else. It's real here.

You know, I hear all these—our friends in the other party talk about how terrible the trial lawyers are. All I want to know is, if you guys are so destructive, why do we have 21 million jobs and the best economy we've ever had? And the same thing about the labor unions. Labor enrollments went up last year for the first time in many years. I think that's a good thing for people to be organized, to be able to not only vent their grievances but, more importantly, build partnerships for the future. And if it's so bad, why do we have the lowest unemployment rate in 30 years? And why do we have the highest productivity that we can ever remember?

I plead guilty to believing that we should not deprive people of jobs or subject them to violence just because they're gay. I'm guilty of that; I believe that. I think anybody that shows up for work and pays their taxes and are willing to do whatever it takes to be a good citizen of their country ought to be treated with the same amount of respect as anybody else. That's what I believe. And I think the evidence is that that's right.

In terms of Hollywood, that's sort of the last refuge of the rightwing arsenal there. [Laughter] I was the first person, not a member of the Republican Party, I was the first political leader, in 1993, to go to Hollywood and ask them to give me a ratings system for television for children and to reduce the amount of inappropriate material our children were exposed to. And not everybody agreed with it, but again, we're in—I have a relationship with a lot of people out there, and we got a rating system. I wish it worked better now because it's kind of—practically, it's difficult because you've got to worry—if you're a parent, you've got to worry about the video games and the TV and the movies and all that. And we're trying to work through that.

But the point I want to make is, my whole idea about politics is that we ought to run it the way we—our country—the way we would run—we would sensibly run a family or a business or any other common enterprise if you were part of a big charitable endeavor here in Dallas. I just think that if you

look at the way the world works and how it's changing, all these trends toward globalization, all the threats that are out there from people who are trying to take advantage of globalization for their own ends—if you look at all the opportunities that are out there through scientific and technological advances, it does not make sense for us in this year to revert to the patterns that I have spent 7 years trying to break.

Everybody has got—we're going to divide up sides now, and if you're a liberal, you've got to be over here; and if you're a conservative, you've got to be over here. And here's your line attacking them, and here's your line attacking the other. And let's don't worry about whether we ever get anything done or not. I think this is nuts. None of you live like this, and none of you have any role at all like this, except when you vote, we're supposed to be like this.

I have worked for 7 long years, with the help of people in my administration, people like you, to prove that we could have a unifying vision that would bring this country together, not in the middle of the road but in a dynamic movement forward.

And look, 7 years ago we had a terrible economy, and now we've got the longest economic expansion in history. Seven years ago we had worsening social problems, and now we've got the lowest welfare and crime rates in 30 years and the lowest poverty rates in 20 years. This works, and it's not rocket science.

And if somebody asked me, "Well, what is the difference? What did you really do that was different as President," and you only get a sentence or two, I would not say our economic policy, although we have a good one, I think, and it's different; or our crime policy, although we have a good one, and it's different; or our welfare policy, although we have a good one, and it's different; or even our education policy, which is profoundly different from what was done before. I would say, I believe that everybody counts; everybody deserves a chance; and we all do better when we try to help each other. And I believe that we don't get anywhere by denying the challenges that are before us so that we can continue the comfortable arguments that we've been making in the past, instead of

taking the uncomfortable but exhilarating march into the future.

That's what this whole deal has been about, and that's what I tried to say in the State of the Union Address. Anybody that's over 30 years old—we've got a few people who aren't in this room, so they will have to learn this—but anybody that's over 30 years old can remember at least one time, if not more, in your life when you made a real bad mistake, not because times were tough but because times were so good, you didn't think anything could go wrong. And so you just didn't want to do what you knew that you ought to do, keep planning, keep thinking about the future, make the tough decisions now. Better to be diverted. Better to lay down and rest. Better to just indulge yourself for the moment. Anybody who has lived any length of time has made a mistake under those circumstances.

That is the question that is facing the United States today. And the consequences are far greater for the Nation than they are for any of us in our personal lives, because we have never had this kind of chance before. So what I tried to say at the State of the Union, what I want to say again to you, I hope you will hammer home to everyone you can talk about this year is that if there was ever a time when we ought to have an election that was a unifying referendum on our common future, it is this one, because the economy is in good shape, the society is in good shape, we've got a lot of confidence, we have relatively few internal crises or external threats. There is nothing to prevent us from saying, "Okay, what's out there that's a big problem or a big opportunity, and let's go deal with it."

And if we do both, we will be able to literally make the future of our dreams for our children. That's what I think the Democrats ought to be saying this year. And that is what we represent. We shouldn't be denying that we ought to change. If somebody who was running for President said, "Vote for me. I'll do just what Bill Clinton did," I'd vote against that person because we live in a dynamic time. But if somebody says, "Vote for me. I'd like to go back to the way it was in 1992 and before," I would certainly vote against that person. *[Laughter]*

So the question is not whether we're going to change; it is how. So I think if you know the number of people over 65 is going to double, you have to meet the challenge of the aging of America. Putting it off will only make it more expensive and more painful. Today we can save Social Security for the baby boom generation, extend the life of Medicare, and add a prescription drug benefit for the 60 percent of the seniors that don't have access to one. We can do it today. We have the money, and we have the reforms to save money, and we ought to do it.

If we know that education is more important than ever before and we've got more kids from more diverse backgrounds, we should act today to make sure all our kids start school ready to learn and graduate ready to succeed: Head Start, after-school programs, school repairs and building and modernizing schools, hooking them all up to the Internet, training the teachers better, the whole nine yards. There is no excuse for us not doing this.

Test scores are up; graduation rates are up; college-going rates are up, but not near where they ought to be but enough so that we know what to do. It would be different if we didn't know what to do. We know what to do now. We don't have an excuse. So to squander this moment in education would be a great error.

In health care, I was always—one of my friends in the Congress came up to me the other day, and they said, "You know, they told me, the insurance companies did, if I voted for your health care plan back in 1994, the number of uninsured people would actually go up." And he said, "They were absolutely right. I voted for it, and there's more uninsured people today than there was when I voted for it." *[Laughter]* So we had to find a different approach.

The only social indicator, just about, that's worse today than it was in '93 when I took office, is that there are more Americans who work for a living without health insurance. So we got this program, and I wish you would look at this. Some of you, by the way, who work with the agencies in Texas, we've got this program that will enroll 5 million kids in the Children's Health Insurance Program of lower income working people who can't

get health insurance on the job. We've got 2 million enrolled now. We've got money for 3 million more. A lot of the ones who aren't enrolled are still in Texas—for a lot of good reasons. I'm not criticizing anybody, but we just need to go out there and get those kids in there.

And I'd like the Congress to say their parents can be enrolled, too, and I'd like the Congress to let people between 55 and 65 who don't have insurance—it's the fastest growing group of uninsured people—people who take early retirement. They're not old enough for Medicare. They don't have insurance. I think they ought to be able to buy into Medicare, and we ought to give them a modest tax credit so it's affordable.

Now, this is a big issue. We know that more and more parents will work. Either they will be single parents working, or two-parent households where both people will be working. If we know that and we know right now that for all of our success, America does less to support work and family—that is, to help working parents succeed as childrearsers, which is the most important job anybody can have—if we know we don't do enough, we should do more.

We know more and more families, as people live longer, are going to be taking care of aging or disabled relatives. We should do more. So I recommended to the Congress to increase our support for the child care tax credit, to give families a long-term care credit for caring for elderly or disabled loved ones, to give parents a tax deduction for college tuition, up to \$10,000 a year so we can open the doors of 4 years of college to all Americans. These are big things. Why? Because we know there will be big problems 10 or 20 or 30 years from now if we don't deal with them right now.

And I could go on and on. I don't want to give you the whole State of the Union Address, but the point I'm trying to make is, the Democratic Party is now in a position to say, we have the resources. We've worked very hard to get rid of this deficit. We've worked very hard to pay the debt down. And we've now got the resources to deal with the aging of America, the challenge of the children and their education, the challenge of health care, the challenge of balancing work

and family. We can do it and still get this country out of debt in 13 years and still provide extra incentives to places like where I was this morning, in the Rio Grande Valley, to give people extra incentives to invest in urban neighborhoods, rural areas, Indian reservations, where our prosperity hasn't reached.

And why do we do all that? Because we believe everybody counts; everybody ought to have a chance; and we all do better when we help each other. That's what I believe. Nobody believes the Democrats anymore are weak on the budget, weak on the economy, weak on welfare, weak on crime. But we do believe that if somebody is trying, we ought to help them make the most of their lives. And we now have 7 years of evidence that that's not only a morally defensible thing to do, it not only makes us feel better, it actually works.

So I will close with this, and I don't want to be maudlin, but I can pretty well say what I want to because I'm not running for anything. [Laughter] First time in over two decades I haven't been on the ballot for anything. Some of those guys on the other side may write me out just to—[laughter]—they may feel deprived that they're being cut out of one more chance to vote against me, but I'm not on the ballot. So I'm just telling you this as a citizen.

Once before in my lifetime, I thought we had a chance to build the future of our dreams. In the last economic expansion—that was until this month the longest one in history; it ran from 1961 to 1969—I graduated from high school in 1964. And I think it's appropriate that I say this here. Most of the people who now look back at that period date the onset of American cynicism to the assassination of President Kennedy. That is dead wrong. That is wrong. The country was heartbroken, but they rallied. They united. They tried to lift themselves up. Lyndon Johnson did a good job of moving the country forward.

And we believed, when I graduated from high school, that we were going to solve the civil rights crisis and the poverty problems of America through the orderly legislative process in Congress and working with people. We believed we were going to be able

to stand against communism without having an unacceptable cost at home or around the world. We believed that we could do this.

Four years later, I was at my college graduation, 2 days after Robert Kennedy was killed, 90 days after Martin Luther King was killed, 94 days after Lyndon Johnson said he wouldn't run for reelection. The economy was beginning to shut down. The country was torn apart over Vietnam, and we had had riots in the streets of America. I have waited, as an American, over 30 years for my country to get another chance to build the future of our dreams for our children.

Most of us get at least one second chance in life, and if we didn't, we'd be a long way behind where we are. Our country, in our lifetime, has this chance in even better circumstances than existed 30 years ago, with science and technology changes that are breathtaking. I believe that the young women here may very likely give birth to children who will have a life expectancy of 100 years. They will come home from the hospital with genetic road maps of their children's lives. And if they give birth to young daughters that have one of those two broken genes that are high predictors of breast cancer, they'll be able to take gene therapies that will block them from ever developing in the first place. I believe that will happen.

I believe the young people here will soon be driving automobiles that get probably 80, 90 miles a gallon, and within 5 years they'll be running on biofuels that will be the equivalent of getting 500 miles to the gallon because they require so little oil to produce. I believe we'll find out what's in those black holes in outer space. I believe we'll be able to keep people with diabetes, adult onset diabetes, alive and healthy to a normal lifespan. I believe that we will actually develop computers the size of a tear drop that use DNA for computer memories more powerful than any human chip, so that you will have tiny little computers with a computing power of all the super computers today.

I believe all this is going to happen. I think we'll also have to deal with highly sophisticated terrorists and organized criminals and drugrunners that have access to chemical and biological and other weapons. There will always be enemies of civilization out there. But

we'll do just fine if we understand that it still comes down to whether you believe everybody counts, everybody ought to have a chance. We're all going to do better if we work together.

For 30 years I have waited for this moment. If I contributed at all to it, I am grateful. But as a citizen, I implore you, don't let America turn away from what works when we've finally got a chance to redeem the whole promise of our Nation.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:30 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to Fred Baron and Lisa Blue, dinner hosts; Mary Albert, widow of former Speaker of the House Carl B. Albert; Bernard ("B") Rapoport, former chairman and chief executive officer, American Income Life Insurance Co., and his wife, Audre; Garry Mauro, former Texas land commissioner; Mayor Ron Kirk of Dallas; State Senator David Cain and his wife, Sally H. Cain, Region VI Director, Office of Intergovernmental and Interagency Affairs, Department of Education; Regina Montoya Coggins, congressional candidate for Texas' Fifth Congressional District; Edward G. Rendell, general chair, Democratic National Committee; and Jim Nicholson, chairman, Republican National Committee.

Remarks at a Democratic Unity Reception

February 10, 2000

Thank you very much. Let me say how delighted and profoundly honored I am to be here with Senator Daschle and Leader Gephardt, with their colleagues in the Senate and the House who are here in large numbers, and all those who aren't here who are with us in spirit today; how much I appreciate Bob Hatcher, and Thelma—and Jenny Mae for being here to remind us of why we're all here in the first place. Their testimony makes clear that our agenda is America's agenda, and our presence here makes clear that we are united in our support of that agenda.

I know some of our friends on the other side of the aisle have suggested that, because this is an election year, we really shouldn't do much. Well, I don't think that the two people who just spoke could take a year off

from their jobs. And since everybody here is still drawing a salary, I don't think we could take a year off from our jobs either.

I want to join with what Senator Daschle and Leader Gephardt have said in thanking the members of this caucus for your role in this long boom and so much of the social progress we have enjoyed, beginning with the courageous vote for the economic plan in 1993. Your commitment, constant over the years, to opportunity for every responsible American and for a community of all Americans, to a Government that gives Americans the tools to live their own dreams, has been absolutely critical to anything that our administration has achieved.

I know that we've had a lot of different policies, but more important than all of the specifics was our common commitment. We wanted Bob and Thelma to be here today because we believe that every American counts. We believe every American should have a chance, and we believe we all do better when we help each other. That is what we believe.

Today I received the Annual Economic Report from my Council of Economic Advisers. It provides further evidence that Americans have built a new economy and that what we believe actually works. The report makes clear that this is the strongest economic expansion in history, not just the longest, that unlike previous economic expansions which, in the end and somewhere in the middle, normally bring you higher deficits, slower productivity, and higher inflation, this one has turned it around, unlike the 1980's when income inequality increased and many hard-pressed working families saw their incomes fall while we were told that the expansion was going on. We now see solid income growth across all groups of American workers since 1993.

All groups are sharing in the prosperity by income, by region, by race. Now, as my leaders said so eloquently, it is for us here in Washington and for the American people to decide what we are going to do with what is truly a magic moment. I argued in the State of the Union Address that we ought to be thinking about people like Bob and Thelma and Jenny Mae, that we ought to ask ourselves, "What are the great challenges before

us?" We ought to clearly state what we believe America's goals ought to be and what steps we intend to take toward them this year. That is what we are united in doing.

And let me say—we have a lot of young people here—I want to say something now and something to you at the end. Anybody over 30 in this audience can recall at least one time in your life and probably more than one time when you made a big mistake, not because you were under the gun but because things were going so well, you thought there were no consequences; you thought you could relax; you thought you really didn't have to think about what you knew was out there plainly before you; so you didn't really have to take those tough decisions; just sort of sit back, relax, enjoy the things that were going on.

That is a message that some people suddenly are sending America today, and that is dead wrong. We will never, in all probability, have another time in our lifetime with so much prosperity, so much progress, so much confidence, and so little trouble at home and abroad, to define the future of our dreams for the next generation of Americans. And we had better take this chance and make the most of it.

I must say, I have been quite amused by a lot of the commentators on both sides of our policy of paying the debt off. Some have said I sound like Calvin Coolidge, and others say that I'm using it as an excuse to spend money on Americans. All I know is, it works. If we get this country out of debt, it means the American people can borrow money at lower interest rates to invest in new businesses, to pay their home loans, to pay their college loans, to pay their car loans. It means that all the young people here for a generation will have a healthier economy and a more affordable life than otherwise would have been the case, and it will be more possible for us to meet the great challenges of this country. That is our united commitment, and we ought to do it.

We are united in meeting the challenge of the aging of America. And believe me, this is not an option. I know things are going well, so we can sort of say, "Well, we'll let this slide a while." The people in this country, the number of people over 65 are going to

double in the next 30 years. Now, if we start to prepare for it now—to reform and modernize and strengthen Medicare, and to take Social Security out beyond the life expectancy of the baby boom generation—we can do it relatively painlessly.

But make no mistake: This country will do it. And if we just fool around and ignore this for 10 years, who knows what the economy will be like 10 years from now? Who knows what the demands on the American people will be like 10 years from now? Now is the time to add a prescription drug benefit to Medicare and to take Social Security out to 2050 and take Medicare out for 25 years—now. Do it now. Save Social Security and Medicare for the baby boomers' retirement.

We know that we live in a marvelous world, where the kids with a good education are going to be able to do things their parents could not even have imagined. And yet, we know that the penalty of not having an education is even greater than ever. We know that it's more challenging than ever before because we have a more diverse group of students, from different racial, cultural, religious, even linguistic backgrounds. We know that right now. And we know that's only going to become a more pronounced trend.

Within a decade, our largest State, California, will have no majority race. Now, we know that. We also know that there's nowhere near equal educational opportunity in the country, and we know what the challenges are. So we say, now—not later—now is the time for high standards, smaller classes, well-trained teachers. Now is the time for all the kids who need it to have the preschool and the after-school programs they need. Now is the time—not later, now.

We know that more and more families will have the parents working, whether they're single-parent families or two-parent families. And we know right now that for all of our success, America gives less support to help people balance the demands of childrearing and work than any other advanced country.

We can be proud of what we did with family and medical leave. We can be proud with what we did with the Children's Health Insurance Program. We can be proud with what we did with the Kennedy-Kassebaum bill to let people take their health insurance

from job to job. But we know that we do not do enough to help people balance the demands of work and childrearing. And raising children, like that beautiful little girl, is still America's most important work. It always will be. And we know we have to do more.

So we believe now is the time to increase the child care tax credit and make it refundable, to help parents do more to pay for college tuition, so that we can go beyond where we were with the HOPE scholarship, which opens the doors of community college to all Americans. With the college tax deduction at 28 percent for all income groups, we can open the doors of 4 years of college to all Americans.

We know we should increase the earned income tax credit for lower income working people. We know we should genuinely ease the marriage penalty for both middle and lower middle income groups. We know we should do this. We don't know whether 10 years from now we will be able to do this, and we don't know what the consequences to countless families will be if we don't do it now. We are united in saying, let's do it now. We don't have to wait. Now is the time to help families to balance the demands of home and work.

You heard Thelma's story. So you know that the one area where the social indicators have not gone in the right direction since 1993 is in the number of people who are covered with health insurance. One of the wits in our Democratic caucus said to me the other day, "You know, all those insurance companies told me back in 1993 or '94, if I voted for your health care plan, the number of uninsured Americans would go up. I voted for it, and sure enough, that's what happened." [Laughter]

We know we need a strong, enforceable Patients' Bill of Rights. And the Congress has fooled around with it long enough. The time is now to pass it. We know we should do more to help enroll more children in the Children's Health Insurance Program. Two million children are enrolled. This Congress provided enough money for somewhere between 4 and 5 million children to be enrolled. And we know—and that's why it's so important.

You remember Thelma's story. I was 4 years old, like this little girl, once, with a mother who was working and, then, a single mother. There are people like her all over the country. One of the most important things we have proposed in this Congress is to let the parents of children who are in this CHIP program also get insurance. They need it. They're working out there. And we ought to do it. And we ought to do it now, not later.

We know the crime rate has gone down to a 30-year low, and it's still too high. And we believe not later, now is the time to learn the lessons of Columbine and all the other things we've seen and pass commonsense legislation to do more to keep guns out of the hands of criminals and away from kids. We can do that and honor every constitutional provision in our founding document and every fundamental value in our society.

We know we've got to keep putting more police on the street in high-crime areas. Who knows, 5 years from now, what kind of condition this country will be? Why should any more children die we can save? Why should any more crimes be committed we can prevent? Now is the time to take strong action to make America the safest big country in the world.

We know there are still too many people and places that haven't participated in this prosperity. We know that. That's why we favor increasing the number of empowerment zones, increasing the incentives to invest in them, and giving Americans all over this country—people like Bob Hatcher—we know there are inner-city neighborhoods where he might be able to put people to work; I think we ought to give him the same tax incentives to invest in those neighborhoods we give him today to invest in Latin America, Africa, or Asia. And we ought to do it now—not later, now.

We are united in that. And as I look at Senator Feingold, I think I should say one other thing. Unlike the other party, we are united—united, down to the last vote in both Houses—in saying now is the time to pass meaningful campaign finance reform legislation in this Congress.

We are also united in believing we have to build one America. That's why we want

to pass the "Hate Crimes Prevention Act." That's why we want to end all discrimination in employment. We don't—I'll say again—we think everybody counts; everybody ought to have a chance; we all do better when we help each other.

I want to make this last point. I see all these young people here. The last time America had a chance like this was when I was about your age. I finished high school in 1964. The Nation was heartbroken when President Kennedy was killed. But President Johnson lifted our spirits, united the country, began to deal with the challenges of civil rights, and we believed that our economy would grow on forever. We believed we would meet the challenges of civil rights in a lawful, peaceful way. We believed we could win the cold war without what ultimately happened in the dividing of our country in Vietnam. And we thought it would go on forever, and everything was hunky-dory.

Four years later, when I was graduating from college, it was 2 days after Robert Kennedy had been killed, a couple of months after Martin Luther King had been killed, and Lyndon Johnson said he wouldn't run for reelection. We had riots in the street. The economy became a cropper on the burdens of paying for a war and inflation. And all that we thought would happen was lost. And the Presidential election in that year was decided on the politics of division, something called the silent majority, which means the world and America is divided between "us" and "them." "I'm with 'us,' and they're with 'them.'" And I have lived with that as a citizen for 30 years.

Now I'm not running for anything. I am not on the ballot. I am telling you this as an American. I have waited for 30 long years to see my country in a position to pull together and move forward together and build the future of our dreams for our children. We dare not blow that chance.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:52 p.m. in the Great Hall at the Library of Congress. In his remarks, he referred to Robert L. Hatcher, chairman, Minority Business Roundtable, who introduced the President; and Thelma Pierce, single working mother, who enrolled her

daughter, Jenny Mae, in the Children's Health Insurance Program.

Statement Announcing Embassy Security Initiatives

February 10, 2000

Today I am announcing initiatives to further improve the security of American men and women serving their country in diplomatic and consular missions overseas and to ensure that the United States performs these activities in the most efficient and effective manner possible.

I intend to request \$1.1 billion in my budget for fiscal year 2001 for Embassy security initiatives including construction of new facilities, additional protective measures for existing facilities, and the full cost of maintaining a high level of security readiness. The budget also includes a sustained commitment to this effort, including \$14 billion over the next 10 years in security enhancement funding and new construction. I will again ask the Congress to provide advance appropriations for the construction of new facilities in future years to provide a solid foundation on which to plan and execute the Embassy security construction program.

We must continue to reexamine how we manage and protect all U.S. Government employees who work overseas. Last year, following on the excellent work of Admiral Crowe and the Accountability Review Board, the Secretary of State appointed a panel, chaired by Lewis Kaden, to review our overseas operations. The Overseas Presence Advisory Panel included a distinguished array of individuals with diplomatic, military, and governmental experience, as well as important members of the business community. The Panel's report last November recommended a wide range of improvements in rightsizing, managing, improving, and protecting our staff who work abroad. The report also recommended changes to the way our representatives overseas work as a team in support of American interests and in the management and financing of U.S. Government overseas facilities.

The Panel has made an important contribution to our Nation's security and the conduct of international affairs. My budget

proposals reflect and fully support their recommendation that a greater commitment is needed in this critical area. I also agree with their recommendation for review and improvement in the way we manage our overseas presence.

I have asked the Secretary of State to lead a Cabinet committee to implement the Panel's recommendations regarding rightsizing. This process will look at the full range of agency staff, who serve in U.S. missions abroad, and make recommendations about the appropriate levels and skills with which we should staff our Embassies in the new century. It will also review and make recommendations regarding the management, financing, and computerization of overseas facilities.

I ask the Congress to join me in working to protect America's presence throughout the world and to ensure that we maintain the best and most effective presence overseas to serve America's interests.

Message to the Senate Transmitting the Russia-United States Treaty on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters With Documentation

February 10, 2000

To the Senate of the United States:

With a view to receiving the advice and consent of the Senate to ratification, I transmit herewith the Treaty Between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters, signed at Moscow on June 17, 1999. I transmit also, for the information of the Senate, a related exchange of notes and the report of the Department of State with respect to the Treaty.

The Treaty is one of a series of modern mutual legal assistance treaties being negotiated by the United States in order to counter criminal activities more effectively. The Treaty should be an effective tool to assist in the prosecution of a wide variety of crimes, including terrorism, money laundering, organized crime and drug-trafficking offenses. The Treaty is self-executing.

The Treaty provides for a broad range of cooperation in criminal matters. Mutual assistance available under the Treaty includes obtaining the testimony or statements of persons; providing documents, records and other items; serving documents; locating or identifying persons and items; executing requests for searches and seizures; transferring persons in custody for testimony or other purposes; locating and immobilizing assets for purposes of forfeiture, restitution, or collection of fines; and any other form of legal assistance not prohibited by the laws of the Requested Party.

I recommend that the Senate give early and favorable consideration to the Treaty and give its advice and consent to ratification.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
February 10, 2000.

**Letter to Congressional Leaders
Transmitting the Report on Bilateral
Assistance to Opposition-Controlled
Areas of Sudan**

February 10, 2000

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Pursuant to section 592(b) of the Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2000 (Public Law 106-113), I hereby transmit to you a report concerning U.S. bilateral assistance to opposition-controlled areas of Sudan.

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to C.W. Bill Young, chairman, House Committee on Appropriations, and Ted Stevens, chairman, Senate Committee on Appropriations.

**Interview With the Chicago Tribune,
the Los Angeles Times, and USA
Today**

February 10, 2000

National Economy

Q. I guess I wanted to ask you, given the way that the economy is going—given that

there's been so much growth, and it's been so successful—how much credit do you think that you and your administration can realistically take, compared to the other factors that people talk about? There's been some discussion, I'm sure you know, recently, with people crediting everything, going back to President Reagan. And I'm just curious on that topic, what your views are?

The President. Well, I think, first of all, if you look at the difference in the expansions of the eighties and the nineties, we had a—the one in the eighties was funded by an old-fashioned explosion of deficit spending. But it built in a structural deficit, which guaranteed profound long-term problems for the economy, very high interest rates, and very slow job growth.

There was a lot of commentary in '91 and '92 about how, even though nominally a recovery had begun, I think some of the writers called it a “triple dip” phenomenon, that we kept sliding back and sliding back.

So I think the main thing we did was to cut interest rates by getting rid of the deficit. And I think that if you go back and read all—I remember what a boost in the bond market there was when we just—when Lloyd Bentsen announced our economic program in December of '92. So I think our main contribution in the short run was to make it absolutely clear that we would have a consistent, disciplined fiscal approach that would cut and then eventually eliminate the deficit. And I think that played a major role in the investment boom. And it cut interest rates, which also put more money in consumers' pockets, which helped fuel the consumer side of this recovery.

But I think that the consistent policies of the Government that go back to the previous administrations, that reflected the second leg of our approach, which also deserves credit, which is keeping the markets open. You've had three administrations here in a row committed—in the eighties and the nineties—committed to open trade. And I think that that's been very good, because that's kept inflation down and spurred continuing competitiveness. And I do believe the previous administrations deserve credit for that.

Then I don't—you know, the lion's share of the credit belongs to the people in the

private economy: the people who restructured in the eighties; the workers who got better training and understood the global economy and didn't press for what would have been inflationary increases in pay and benefits, that aligned them more with the real profitability of their firms; and then finally what, I think, only in the last couple of years has come to be fully appreciated is the enormous contribution of the technology revolutions, which are centered, still, in the high-tech sector—they're 8 percent of our employment, but they've been 30 percent of our growth—but also are rifling through every other sector of the economy in a way that has added to productivity that is only now being measured. If you noticed, the last couple days we had a new estimate of productivity growth. My sense is that all along, the economists underestimated—understandably, based on past experience—the productivity contribution of technology and the ability of a combination of fiscal discipline, open markets, and productivity increases, to prolong the growth in a way that would generate large numbers of jobs and begin to broaden the benefits of the recovery. That was another real problem for—we had 20 years where income inequality continued to increase, because of the way the recovery was structured. So I think you have to look at the whole piece.

And then I think now, we're beginning to get the benefits of the third part of our economic strategy, which was to continue to make the requisite public investments, which have, I think, made a significant contribution in education, in training, and we've got college going up by 10 percent now, over when I took office. We've made real, continuing investments in science and technology, which I think are pivotal to the long-term health of the economy and the continuation of this productivity increase.

So I think that we've made a contribution, but the lion's share of the credit—as always, since it's a private economy; we had the highest percentage of private-sector jobs in this economic boom, I think, of any one since we've been keeping such statistics.

Q. To follow up on this, Mr. President, I notice that in your last interview with a group here about the economy a week ago

or so, you were very generous with credit. There are some people, in fact, who are saying, this is one long boom. We're in the 17th year of an expansion. What do you think of that account of what's going on with the economy?

The President. Well, we could say that, basically, we've been in a 30-year boom and gone back to '61, or a 40-year boom, but for the oil price problems, which led to all the inflation. I mean, you can argue this flat or round. There is a fundamental health in the American free enterprise system, which has prospered in the global economy. And in that sense, the people who set up the system at the end of World War II deserve a lot of this credit. I don't think you can disaggregate all this.

I think the fundamental mistake that was made in the eighties was basically abandoning arithmetic. I think that we got out of that recession, and we had—you remember—we had impossible conditions in the seventies, with recession and high inflation at the same time, caused by a set of economic circumstances that were not of our own making, at least certainly mostly not of our own making.

So the idea of stimulating the economy in the early years—of the Reagan years was, even though it was masked in anti-Government rhetoric, was basically traditional Keynesian economics. But the problem is, when we had a recovery, because it was sold as a, you know, "tax cuts are good; Government's bad" package, we wound up with a structural deficit that couldn't be overcome without a series of highly difficult and controversial decisions that were embodied in the Budget Act of '93, which required both tax increases and spending restraint. And the people who shouldered the burden of that paid a considerable political price in the elections of '94, but I think there's no question that it enabled us to have a balanced, long-term, stable, not only statistical recovery but finally job-growth recovery that was more broadly shared. It seems to me that was the problem with the eighties philosophy, that we wound up with a structural deficit that was totally unsustainable. And I think it basically grew out of the ideological wrapping of what was done in 1981.

Q. Just one last question along those lines. Sometimes when I listen to you recently, in the talks that you give, I get the sense that you're trying to assure or encourage that your administration get sufficient credit for the boom that's going on now, whether for historians, whether in the next election. And I'm wondering if you have any sense of that.

The President. No, I don't have any sense of that. What I say is what I believe to be true, and I've tried to—with you, I've tried to, as I said in the State of the Union, as always the major credit for anything good that happens in this country belongs to the American people and the people and what they do in their private lives.

I think Government plays a pivotal role, and I do not—let me flip it around. If you go—forget about what I might say. Look at what Alan Greenspan has said; look at what all the commentators have said, going back to the '92, '93, '94 period. I do not believe that we would have had a recovery this robust, with this many jobs—I don't think we'd be anywhere close to that—if we hadn't taken serious, aggressive, and immediate action to get rid of the deficit and to bring interest rates down and to free up investment and at the same time, by getting interest rates down, to put more money into the pockets of people. They had lower home mortgage, car payments, college loan payments, credit card interest payments, which enabled the consumer side of this boom to continue.

I also don't believe that there would have been anything like the amount of business investment borrowing or consumer borrowing, if—I don't think that would have been sustainable, in this environment, unless the Government had not only eliminated the deficit but gone into surplus and begun to offset private debt with public savings.

So I simply think that's a fact. But I don't—but my view of this is different. I don't think anybody can claim sole credit. And I'm not so interested in that. I think what's happened is, America is following a balanced policy now. And if America stays on that course when I'm not President anymore, I think we'll meet with success. And then we'll have to be flexible, you know, if intervening events cause a recession, well, there will be cause for adjustment in policy.

But if we had adjustment in policy, it might work.

I mean, if we had continued with these deficits, then the next time we had a recession, deficit spending wouldn't have been an option to help get the country out of a recession. So to me, the American people should look at this in terms of—I think I did my job. But I think the rest of the—I think Alan Greenspan did his job. I think the people in the high-tech sector were terrific. I think the people who restructured all of American industry and business to increase their efficiency and productivity were great. And I think the working people of this country deserve a lot of credit for understanding that they can only get wage and benefit increases that were real, and if they got out of line with economic growth, then that could contribute to inflation as well.

So I think we've had a remarkable balance here, where the American people, all of us in our own way, essentially have done what we were supposed to do. And there's more than enough credit to go around.

Technology Revolution

Q. Mr. President, can you talk just a little bit—you talked about the high-tech sector and how important that is to the economy. Can you talk about the Internet for a second and how important it is to the ongoing boom? And also, can you tell us how worried you are about what's happened over the last 3 days with these attacks on websites? If this is a growing part of the economy, should we be concerned that it's so vulnerable to attack? And is there anything the Government ought to be doing about it, beyond what the FBI is already doing?

The President. Well, let me give you a brief answer to the first question you asked, because I think we could talk for hours about that. Quite apart from the technology revolution, I don't think we have any way of measuring the contributions that the Internet is making and will continue to make, not only to the overall growth of the American economy but to the range of individual opportunities open to people.

You may have heard me say this in some of my talks, but I was amazed—I was out in northern California a few weeks ago with

a bunch of people who work with eBay. And they were telling me, now, that there are over 20,000 Americans who actually make a living on eBay, not working for eBay but on eBay buying and selling, trading—and that they have enough information on their user base to know that a significant number of these people were once on welfare. And they figured out a way to stay home, take care of their kids, and literally make a living buying and selling on eBay.

Now, that's all I know about that. I don't have any more facts. It's an interesting story you might want to follow up on, but the point is that this is just one example of, I think, a virtually unlimited number of new economic opportunities which will be open. I also think it will shrink distance in a way that will make it possible for more profitable investments to be made in areas that are now still kind of left behind in this economy.

And I—you know, we've tried to do an analysis of all the areas in America which have had slow job growth or which still have higher unemployment. And we developed this new markets initiative and proposed more empowerment zones and things of that kind. But the—if we can bridge the digital divide and literally make the Internet accessible to lower income people and to places that are not fully participating in this economy, I think the potential is staggering.

Now, to the second question, yes, I'm concerned about the latest hacking incidents. But I think that, you know, we've gotten all this incredible benefit out of a system that is fundamentally open. And as you know, I've worked hard to keep it unencumbered, to try to make sure that Internet commerce is not unduly burdened by regulation or taxation. And if you have an open system like this, you're going to have to have continuous guarding against intrusion. And people go where the money is. It's like Willie Sutton, you know? I mean, the money's in information and in knowledge about transactions and opportunities.

And so my view of this is that this—our renewed vigilance to try to deal with cyberhacking, or even cyberterrorism, is part of the cost of doing business in the modern world. We've been working hard on this for 2 years. We've proposed, I think, \$2 billion

in this budget to deal with it. We've got this, you know, this proposal for a cyber-academy to train young people to try to work to help us prevent illegal intrusions into the Internet and into important databases.

And we have this FBI center, as you know, and—I think it's in Pennsylvania, near Pittsburgh—that's looking into these latest incidents. But I'm going to bring in some people next week from the private sector and from our Government team, to talk about what if anything else we can do about this.

Q. Because of the incidents that just happened?

The President. What?

Q. You're going to bring them in because of these events that just happened?

The President. Yes, Yes. As a result—you know, we have a continuing ongoing consultation with them. We've had extensive conversations leading up to the proposals that we've already made and the work we've done for the last 2 years.

But I don't—I wouldn't—I think it's important that we not overreact to this. I mean, we don't want to shut off this incredible resource, which I think will be a source of great wealth and, I think, will have all kinds of social benefits, not only in the United States but around the world. And we just have to recognize that it's like any other new institution that's a source of ideas, information, and wealth.

I mean, people used to—it's harder to rob a bank than it used to be, and we figured out how to make it harder. And we'll figure out—we'll continue to figure out to secure the Internet without shutting it down or closing off options. But the American people, in my view, should look at this as an inevitable negative development in what is an overall very positive trend. And there's probably no silver bullet to deal with it, but we'll keep working at it until we can prove our capacity to protect the people who are participating in it.

Q. But doesn't this set some limits on the growth of the new economy, the Internet economy? I mean, there was this poor soul who was described in the Post today—he sat there on E-TRADE and watched his stock drop 6 percent while he couldn't get online. I mean, if some 14-year-old kid—and we

don't know who has done this, but if some 14-year-old kid with a PC can screw up the system that badly, doesn't that effectively limit how much people are going to trust it and how much people are going to use it?

The President. Unless we can solve it. But unless we can figure out how to solve the problem—but my instinct is that there are people just as clever or more clever who will be interested in making the thing work for society as a whole as there are those that want to gum up the works.

The fact that a 14-year-old did it, I don't think, should be surprising to anyone. I mean, all the rest of us—you know, you get to thinking by the time you're 35, you're too old to break new ground in this area. But it's troubling, but I don't—again, I would say that if you look throughout history, every new positive development contains within it the seeds of its own vulnerability, and then people, either for pure mischievousness or because they're trying to do something really wrong and reach some illicit benefit try to interfere with it.

So I don't think what you're seeing today is sort of anything new in terms of human nature or people trying to put their ingenuity to work for destructive purposes. And we just have to keep working until we find ways to thwart it. Because I think fundamentally, this has been an extraordinarily positive development for our country and for the world.

Biotechnology and the Human Genome Project

Q. Mr. President, can I take you from the new economy to what you may call the new economy, biotech and the human genome. As you know and as you've said in the State of the Union, we're within months of having a first draft of the entire human genetic code. As I'm sure you also know, there is some argument about how we can best put it to use: Whether we should have very broad access to it by scientists and so on, or whether we get products, new treatments, and so on, faster, if it's more narrowly constrained, or access to parts of it, substantial parts of it, are more narrowly constrained; should the public, and especially the research community have ready access

to the underlying human code, the genome itself?

The President. Yes.

Q. You know that there are people who say that we should allow extensive, broad patenting of it, not just to use, but have a compositional matter portion where people actually—companies, biotech companies—biotech companies, the drug companies actually control the underlying sequence, and that's the best route to get products out fast, get new treatments. What do you think of that argument?

The President. I basically agree with the guidance that the Patent Office has now announced, that they believe that the broad information, the basic sequencing of the genome should be made public and should be made publicly available to scientists and researchers, to all people in private sector businesses and—

Q. Why do you think the Patent Office is—do you think the Patent Office is saying that, and why do you think the Patent Office is saying that? Because there are many people, Dr. Collins, for example, who you were with 2 days ago who say that's not what the Patent Office is doing?

The President. Let me answer your question first of all, and then—I think the patenting should be for specific discoveries and developments that have a clear and definable benefit, because you don't want to take those things, you don't want to—I think we would be making an error not to give people who develop such things the benefits of them, and you would, then, discourage private investment and research in that area.

Now, I think some—I believe—and I think that's the position that Dr. Collins believes that we should have. Now, the Patent Office has been criticized for not following that, for having a policy that was too broad if you will, but they have—my understanding is that they've announced new guidance and that this is the policy they're going to try to follow prospectively into the future, and it's the one I think they should follow. And I understand there is a debate about this.

But I think most scientists and researchers believe the basic information ought to be as broadly shared as possible. And then when people develop something that has specific

use and commercial benefit and the kind of thing that has to be done and should properly be done in the private sector, then that ought to be patentable.

Q. Because, for example, Dr. Collins, who you were with a couple of days ago, and Dr. Lander talked with you and to you about this at the millennial evening last fall, have concern about this, I wonder, would you sketch what you think—in a little more detail—what you think ought to be publicly available and how you can assure that that is publicly available even when we have a very aggressive, very innovative private sector that is filing patents like mad?

The President. The thing that I'm concerned about, obviously, the thing that I'm concerned about is the capacity of the Patent Office to make the judgments and to make them at a timely fashion and to draw the lines in the right way. And you know, I certainly don't feel, for example, that I have the level of knowledge to know how to split the hairs there. And I think what we've got to do is to make absolutely sure if we've got the right policy. Then we have to make sure that the Patent Office has the capacity to implement the policy, not only in the right way but in a timely way.

The worst thing would be to have these things all bogged down for years and years and years. And I think that's one of the things we're going to have to assess this year to really try to make sure that we have the capacity to make the right judgments and to make them in a timely fashion.

National Economy

Q. If I could take the discussion back to a little bit of a more broad approach, things are going so well now economically speaking, and you regularly recite figures that are very impressive, I'm wondering if there is any particular thing or set of things that you regard as possible threat on the horizon that we need to look out for, that we need to be paying attention to. There's been some discussion of high oil prices, for example, and they've talked about the trade deficit.

What would you see as the things we need to be watching?

The President. The thing that bothers me about the high oil prices, primarily, is the

disproportionate effect it has on people who are excessively relying on oil. We still have, mostly in the mid-Atlantic and New England—we still have too many people who still rely on home heating oil. They're the ones that have really been hurt.

The country's overall reliance on oil is much less than it was 25 years ago when we had the big oil price problem. And we're on the verge of real, new breakthroughs in fuel efficiency. Our ability to build our buildings with far less energy use per square foot is dramatically increasing, both residences and office buildings. There are all kinds of advances in factory efficiency now.

So the real problem I have with the oil prices is the very old-fashioned problem of the people that are just too dependent on home heating oil, and it's a real, serious problem.

But I don't think that will sink the overall economy or threaten it. I think it's far more likely that we have to be vigilant about the size of our trade deficit and the amount of American obligations held by people in other countries, combined with a very high level of debt in this country.

One of the reasons—right now, we're in good shape on that, because the debt-to-wealth ratio of Americans looks very, very good indeed, even though the per capita debt is high. I also think the individual savings rate is somewhat understated because I don't think we calculate the impact of homeownership as well as we should, and we have the highest homeownership in history.

But for me, that's another argument for our economic strategy. That's why we ought to be trying to—not trying to, we ought to be actually paying down the debt and be very disciplined about it and say that we're on a track to eliminate the publicly held debt over the next 13 years. I understand there's a lot of problems with people who think that would be bad for the bond market and interest rate settings and all that. That's an arcane decision we could have on another day.

But I think basically, one of the reasons that I have been so adamant about paying this debt down is that it tends to stabilize a system that requires if you're having a lot of business expansion, requires a lot of business borrowing for new investment, and

where you have a lot of personal borrowing from people who feel the security to do it, because they have more assets, but the value of the assets is dependent in part on the overall stability of the economy, the confidence of the American people, and the confidence of investors around the world.

I don't think we made a mistake to leave our markets open, for example, during the Asian financial crisis, even though it exploded our trade deficit, because I think it helped the Asians to recover more quickly, and it helped to stabilize the global economy. But if you ask me the only things that I'm concerned about, I'm concerned about those things. And I think the way to deal with them is to do what we're doing, which is to keep paying the debt down, so that the overall fiscal health of the American economy, when you look at public and private debt, against assets and wealth and growth potential, continues to be robust and strong and the confidence remains high.

Japan's Economic Situation

Q. Speaking of the trade deficit, Japan looks like it's sliding back into recession. I know that this Government has been jawboning the Japanese for years now to try to get them to change policies. How worrisome is it that after all their effort, they're going backwards at this point in terms of our trade deficit?

The President. I think that—let's just talk about Japan a minute. First of all, it's a very difficult case, because you've got this country of people who work very hard, who are very well educated, and who have an enormous technological base. My heart goes out to them, because they have tried to take—they've taken interest rates down virtually to zero and are virtually paying people to borrow money. And then the savings habits of the Japanese are so great—and for that and other reasons they've had difficulty making that strategy work.

Then they've got a Government deficit now—they've tried deficit spending, and the deficit is a higher percentage of GDP than ours was when I became President. So I think that somehow what they have to do is to unlock the creative potential and the confidence of their people at the same time,

which will be politically difficult because it will require them, I think, to keep going to, in effect, deregulate, open up, and make more competitive their economy. I think that somehow they've got to tap the energies of all these young people, like all these young people in America are creating all these Internet companies and doing all the things they're doing there.

They're an immensely gifted people, and they work like crazy, and they have everything they need I think to succeed. And they're highly efficient in their energy use. They've got a lot of things going for them. I just think that it must be so difficult for them because the traditional stimulus hasn't worked, traditional bringing interest rates down hasn't worked, because of the nature of the present economy. So I think they're just going to have to keep pushing to unlock the sort of spirit of entrepreneurialism and creativity and confidence in their economy. And meanwhile, we'll just keep working with them and do the best we can.

Yes, I'm concerned about it, but I just have to believe that sooner or later—and hopefully, it will be sooner rather than later—they'll come back, because they just have so many assets, they have so much talent.

Q. Does it frustrate you at all that they refuse to change some of the structural policies that we have tried to get them to change over the years?

The President. Yes, but it just takes time. I mean, look at how long the rest of the world beat up on us before we finally had the—in the eighties—look how long the rest of the world hit on us before we finally did something about our deficit. For all of the talk about the globalization of the world's economies, nations are still governed by their people, their own institutions; they deal with their own impediments as well as their own promise. And I think they'll get there.

I think the Prime Minister of Japan is an able man and a man who has shown some political courage already in making some changes, and I think what we have to do is keep pulling for them and do our best to share what we believe will work. And we all need a little humility because they—you know what works in one decade is not always

great in the next decade. And all these countries had to—they worked on us for a long time before—you know, telling us we had to do something about the deficit.

But I just hope that they will—I wish that they had the confidence in themselves right now that I have in them. I wish that they believed that they could make this sort of leap into the 21st century economy and still be able to maintain their social fabric. And I think eventually they'll do it because I don't think they want to fail. I think they want to succeed. And you can't blame them for playing out these two tried and true strains of economic recovery, on the deficit spending and on the low interest rates, before getting to—because that was easier to do than to deal with the underlying structural issues. And I think eventually they'll do that.

I mean, look at the pain that was caused in America in the 1980's when all the industries had to be restructured and all the—the whole economy was topsy-turvy, and there was a lot of difficulty there for people. And countries don't willingly absorb that kind of short-term pain, even though they know the long-term gain is out there.

So I just think that—but I think they'll get to it. They'll have to. And I think they will, and I think we just need to stick with them, keep encouraging them, keep supporting the right kind of change.

Q. Thank you very much.

The President. It's an interesting time to be alive, gentlemen. Don't you think?

NOTE: The interview began at 5:36 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, the President referred to Francis S. Collins, Director, National Human Genome Research Institute, National Institutes of Health; former Senator Lloyd Bentsen; and Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi of Japan. An interviewer referred to Eric Lander, director, Whitehead/MIT Center for Genome Research. Participating in the interview were George Hager of USA Today, Peter Gosselin of the Los Angeles Times, and Naftali Bendavid of the Chicago Tribune. This interview was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 11. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

Memorandum on United States Military Activities in East Timor *February 10, 2000*

Presidential Determination No. 2000-12

Memorandum for the Secretary of State

Subject: United States Military Activities in East Timor

Pursuant to the authority vested in me as President, including under sections 10(d)(1) and 10(a)(2)(B) of the United Nations Participation Act of 1945, as amended (22 U.S.C. 287 et seq.) (the "Act"), I hereby:

- (a) determine that the deployment of United States military forces to support East Timor's transition to independence without reimbursement from the United Nations is important to the security interests of the United States; and
- (b) delegate to you the authority contained in section 10(d)(1) of the Act with respect to assistance to support East Timor's transition to independence that is covered by section 10 of the Act. You are authorized and directed to report this determination to the Congress and to arrange for its publication in the *Federal Register*.

William J. Clinton

NOTE: This Presidential determination was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 11.

Remarks on the Dedication of the James S. Brady Press Briefing Room and an Exchange With Reporters *February 11, 2000*

The President. It's the first time Joe Lockhart's ever introduced me, I think. [Laughter]

Press Secretary Joe Lockhart. Probably the last.

The President. I thought the last phrase was going to be, "and the man who makes my job somewhere between impossible and miserable every day." [Laughter]

Well, ladies and gentlemen, this is a happy day for all of us, and, I believe, for people

throughout the United States. I want to welcome Jim and Sarah, and their son, Scott. I want to welcome Mike and Larry and Jerald and Pierre here, the former White House Press Secretaries. I also want to remember, as I know Jim and Sarah would want me to, Jim's Press Office Assistant Sally McElroy, who passed away last summer. Her husband, Robert Evans, is here, and we welcome him.

Today we honor a man whose courage, purpose and humor make him a standout Press Secretary and an outstanding human being. Jim Brady, after all, was the man who convinced the White House Press Corps to abandon decades of tradition and actually raise their hands when they wanted to ask a question. *[Laughter]* Jim Brady was the man who changed press conferences forever, one day in the 1970's, when he invited journalists to see a bipartisan group of Senators cutting the budget—with hedge trimmers. Jim Brady was the man who, when Members of Congress proposed to give themselves a \$50-a-day tax deduction, responded with a press release that was one word long: Stupid. *[Laughter]*

Jim Brady is living proof that you can't kill courage, that it takes more than a cheap handgun to destroy a strong spirit. As he himself once said, "no one can shoot away your sense of humor."

Jim Brady was the man who changed press conferences forever for me on this issue. And I want to thank him and Sarah from the bottom of my heart.

Every time I saw him in the early days of my Presidency, and even before, when the Brady bill was being debated, I realized that his ready smile and sense of humor had to overcome despair that none of us can fully understand and pain that none of us has ever really experienced. I realized that he could have chosen to live his life out in private regret, but instead he chose a public embrace. He could have been remembered, no matter what he did, as a good Press Secretary, a committed campaigner, a world-class chili cook. But he instead chose the connection to other human beings and an eye to the future. Even when he was still in the hospital and had doubts about his own future, he reached out to his fellow patients, to give them reasons to keep going. And for more

than 15 years, now, he has traveled our Nation on behalf of the National Head Injury Foundation and other groups, with a simple message: Persevere; never give up.

Jim and Sarah have known uncommon perseverance, and they have demonstrated to us what really counts in life. They have built a bipartisan coalition in this country to strengthen our Nation's gun laws, to make our children and our future safer. Against tremendous odds, they fought for 7 years to pass the Brady bill. It was my great honor to sign it into law in 1993. In 1994, we passed the assault weapons ban. We then made it illegal for a young person to buy or receive a handgun.

And what has happened? We have seen gun crime fall by more than a third. We have seen the Brady bill keeps guns out of the hands of nearly a half-million felons, fugitives, and stalkers. We cannot know how many people are alive and fully strong and healthy today because of the labors of Jim and Sarah Brady.

Sometimes in Washington, it's easy to cover the politics and not the policy. And sometimes it's even more interesting, I'm sure, for all of you to cover the politics and not the policy. But when you see Jim and Sarah—for many of you not just colleagues but friends—you know that what we do here really does make a difference, and they have made a difference.

As we have been painfully reminded here in Washington these past few days, guns still are claiming the lives of too many of our children. There is more work to do, and Jim and Sarah are ready to do it. They have called for extending Brady background checks to sales at gun shows, for mandating child safety locks to be sold with every handgun, for banning the most violent juvenile offenders from ever owning handguns, from ending the importation of large-capacity ammunition clips, and for ensuring that all handgun owners have a State license, showing they've passed a background check and know how to handle a gun safely.

It is truly fitting that this room will be named for Jim Brady, for working here requires tenacity and perseverance and, above all, a sense of humor. Joe and I also thought about enacting another one of Jim's ideas

that he and President Reagan advocated, hinging the floor to give deserving reporters immediate, involuntary access to the swimming pool below. [Laughter] But as much as I admire Jim Brady, I decided that I shouldn't do that. Even though I'm not running for anything, I still need a little bit of press pander from time to time.

Today we give name to a room. But Jim and Sarah Brady have already given far more to their national crusade. I want to finish my remarks by quoting a higher authority: Helen Thomas. [Laughter] A few years ago, Helen said these words to Jim Brady's biographer, "He's like a great tree standing by the river. He's a role model, and that's what life is all about. He realizes life is to be lived, that we should give our all, that we're lucky to be alive."

Jim and Sarah, may we all continue to draw inspiration from your strength and spirit here in the James Brady Briefing Room and all around our Nation.

Now, I want to unveil this plaque and read it to you.

[At this point, the plaque was unveiled.]

The President. It says, "This room is named in honor of James S. Brady, White House Press Secretary from January 23, 1981 until January 20, 1989. Mr. Brady served his Nation with honor and distinction, strengthening the bond between Government and press. May his courage and dedication continue to inspire all who work in this room and beyond."

Congratulations, Jim Brady.

[At this point, former Press Secretary James Brady and Sarah Brady made brief remarks.]

Internet Security

Q. Mr. President, do you want to update us on the cyberterrorism investigation? Anything new there?

The President. No, but as I said, we are going to have some people in next week, and we're going to look at our overall capabilities.

Q. What can you do, what can the Government do?

The President. Well, I think we've got a \$2 billion budget up there on the Hill now, to increase our capacity to make all systems less resistant to hacking and to train more

young people and pay them better to come and help work on our side of this issue.

But let me say—I did a couple of interviews yesterday to make a general point I would like to reiterate to all of you—basically the development of the Internet and the sophistication of the computers has been a great thing for the world. It's brought us closer together. It's given opportunities to people who wouldn't otherwise have them, something that Jim and Sarah care a lot about. They've helped to empower people with disabilities all over America, and all over the world, to realize their full potential. But this greater openness and speed of this system and the importance of it have necessarily made for greater vulnerability for people who are just mischievous and people who have far darker motives.

And this is no different from any other development in human history. If you go back from the beginning of time, where things of value are stored, people with bad motives will try to get to those things of value. Willy Sutton said he robbed banks because that's where the money is.

So now, vast things of value are stored in our computers and transactions of great values occur on the Internet, and what you will see here, there will not be an instantaneous solution to this, but banks are a lot harder to rob today than they used to be. That's what's going to happen here. This will be an ongoing effort to try to make sure we get all the benefits of the Internet, all the benefits of the computer revolution, but we develop better defenses and better defenders. And I believe we will do that.

In terms of these specific instances, we're doing everything we can through our FBI center in western Pennsylvania, and in other places, to do the appropriate investigations.

Middle East Peace Process

Q. In the Middle East, Mr. President, do you fear that the Israel-Lebanon conflict is spinning out of control? And what does this mean for the peace process in general?

The President. Well, so far I think both sides have tried to keep it within control but take the—the Israelis have taken the retaliatory action they felt they had to take. But

there has been some restraint there in the hope of keeping the peace process alive.

It seems to me that it is a sober reminder of why we ought to resume the peace process with great determination. A comprehensive peace between Syria and Lebanon and Israel is the only way, ultimately, I think, to resolve the continuing difficulties over many years, now, along that border.

And similarly, I think peace between Israel and the Palestinians is critical to resolving the gnawing problems which reoccur from time to time within the borders of the countries. So I would hope that it would redouble people's energy for it, and so far, I think that that's where we are—that you don't have the people who are the real players here, as nearly as I can see, and I watch it pretty closely, you know—giving up on the peace process. You do have a lot of frustration, anger; there's still a surprising amount of misunderstanding of each other's motives, given how long these folks have been living together and working together. But we'll see. I'm hopeful.

Northern Ireland Peace Process

Q. Mr. President, the British Government is on the verge of moving to suspend the power-sharing Government in Northern Ireland. How would you view that move, first, sir? And secondarily, the editorial opinion there seems to blame the IRA for the latest impasse. Do you have a comment on that, sir?

The President. Well, when the matter is resolved I might have more to say, but right now you should know that, at least before I came out here, the thing was still hanging some fire. But it wasn't clear to me what was going to happen.

I have been heavily involved, and the whole administration has been, in the last few weeks in trying to keep the Irish peace process on track. We believe that all the requirements of the Good Friday accords, which the voters of Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic embraced, should be fulfilled. And we hope that a way can be found to keep this going. And until there is a suspension, that's all I want to say, because we're working hard on this, and there's still some chance that we can go forward without a suspension.

Should there be a suspension, it is imperative that all the parties do it on terms which do not allow a back-sliding, and that the opportunity be taken to figure out a way forward that again will allow everybody to meet all the requirements that the Irish voters voted for in breathtaking margins.

I don't want to say anything else until we know how this plays out today. We've got a few more hours here. When we see how it's resolved today, I will say a little more. But I have to be very careful. I've been working very hard on this, and I want to be a positive, not a negative factor.

Press Secretary Joe Lockhart. This will be the last question.

2000 Election

Q. This is a tough political question that I hope all of your returning guests can appreciate. You've probably heard of the expression, "Clinton fatigue," and I'm wondering what you think of that as a phenomenon, and whether that will have some bearing on how many people you go out to campaign for in this election year.

The President. Well, I get tired from time to time. [Laughter] That's the only one I'm familiar with. [Laughter] I don't even know how to comment on that. I've got more requests right now to help than I can fulfill, and I think what I will be inclined to do is—I always feel that people running for office are the best judge of what's in their own interest, not me.

And I got plenty to do here. But so far, I've been asked to do more events than I can do. And I had—I went down to the Rio Grande Valley this week, for example, a place that I was the first President since Dwight Eisenhower to visit. And I made my third visit down there; I had a wonderful reception.

But I can't comment on that. I think that—my guess is that that will vary from State to State, and congressional district to congressional district. I'll just—I'll do what I can to help the people and the causes I believe in, but I don't want to get in the way.

I also find that the ability of any outsider to affect in a positive way the course of an election is far more limited than is generally supposed. The voters understand that every

election year they get to be in control again. And so, if you notice, like when I went to campaign for Mr. Street in Philadelphia, a place that has been enormously good to me, I was very careful in what I said to the voters. I said, you shouldn't be for him because I am, but you know, I'm your friend; here are my reasons; I hope you'll listen to my reasons and make up your own mind. It's a very delicate thing. I've watched this for years.

I remember once, Jim Brady's old boss, President Reagan, in '84, when he was winning every vote in America, came to Arkansas and made an appearance for my opponent. And afterward, on Election Day, he got 62 percent of the vote, so did I. [*Laughter*] So you have to be—you've got to be humble in these things and just sort of show up for work every day.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:40 a.m. in the James S. Brady Press Briefing Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Mr. Brady's wife, Sarah Brady, chair, Handgun Control, Inc.; former White House Press Secretaries Michael McCurry, Larry M. Speakes, J.F. terHorst, and Pierre E.G. Salinger; and Mayor John F. Street of Philadelphia, PA. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of former Press Secretary James Brady, Sarah Brady, and Press Secretary Joe Lockhart. James S. Brady, former White House Press Secretary, was wounded in the 1981 assassination attempt on President Ronald Reagan.

Statement on Peacekeeping Efforts in East Timor

February 11, 2000

Over the last several months, the United States has worked with our partners in Southeast Asia to help East Timor in its transition to independence and peace. I am proud we were able to support the efforts of the Australian-led INTERFET force, which has brought security and hope to East Timor. With its mission accomplished, INTERFET is now handing responsibility to a U.N. peacekeeping mission, through which the countries of the region will once again provide the vast majority of troops.

Today I am announcing that the United States will continue to support our friends and allies in this important endeavor. A small

number of U.S. officers will serve as observers in the U.N. mission. As part of their normal exercises, other U.S. personnel will contribute to humanitarian efforts, such as rebuilding schools and restoring medical services. These efforts will complement our financial contributions to the peacekeeping operation, as well as humanitarian and development assistance to East Timor that will total over \$70 million this year. We will also continue to stand by Indonesia as it continues its hopeful democratic transformation.

In this way, we will contribute to the birth of two new democracies in a region where freedom and tolerance are taking root. And we will bolster the ability and willingness of the countries in that region to take the lead in building peace.

Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

February 5

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Chappaqua, NY.

February 7

In the morning, the President returned to Washington, DC. Later, he traveled to Hot Springs, VA, where he attended the 2000 House Democratic Issues Conference. In the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC.

The President announced his intention to appoint Mary Lou Leary as Acting Assistant Attorney General in the Office of Justice Programs at the Department of Justice.

February 8

The President announced his intention to nominate Donna Jean Hrinak to be Ambassador to Venezuela.

The President announced his intention to nominate Douglas Alan Hartwick to be Ambassador to Laos.

The President announced his intention to nominate Christopher R. Hill to be Ambassador to Poland.

The President announced his intention to nominate John R. Dinger to be Ambassador to Mongolia.

The President announced his intention to nominate Mary Ann Peters to be Ambassador to Bangladesh.

The President announced his intention to nominate Christopher A. McLean to be Administrator, Rural Utilities Service at the Department of Agriculture.

The President announced his intention to nominate John Martin O'Keefe to be Ambassador to Kyrgyz Republic.

February 9

In the morning, the President traveled to McAllen, TX.

In the evening, the President traveled to Dallas, TX, and later, he returned to Washington, DC, arriving after midnight.

The President announced his intention to nominate Donnie R. Marshall to be Administrator of the Drug Enforcement Administration.

The President announced his intention to nominate Michael J. Senko to be Ambassador to the Marshall Islands and to Kiribati.

The President announced his intention to nominate Alan D. Solomont to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for National and Community Service.

The President announced his intention to nominate Danny Lee McDonald and Bradley A. Smith to be Commissioners on the Federal Election Commission.

February 10

The President announced his intention to nominate Edward William Gnehm, Jr., to be Ambassador to Australia.

The President announced his intention to nominate Daniel A. Johnson to be Ambassador to Suriname.

The President announced his intention to nominate Ronald D. Godard to be Ambassador to Guyana.

The President announced his intention to appoint Valerie Crotty as a member of the Commission on President Scholars.

The President announced his intention to appoint Jane Macon as a member to the National Selective Service Appeals Board.

The President announced his intention to appoint Haim Saban as a member of the President's Export Council.

The White House announced that the President asked Energy Secretary Bill Richardson to take new measures to address the critical situation involving home heating oil, and that he directed Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala to release additional funding in Low Income Home Energy Assistance emergency funds for States, territories, and tribes due to continuing increases in home heating fuel prices this winter.

February 11

The President announced his intention to nominate Thomas N. Slonaker to be Special Trustee for American Indians at the Department of the Interior.

The President announced his intention to nominate E. Ashley Wills to be Ambassador to Sri Lanka and to Maldives.

The White House announced that the President announced import relief for the U.S. line pipe industry.

The White House announced that the President announced import relief for the U.S. steel wire rod industry.

Nominations Submitted to the Senate

The following list does not include promotions of members of the Uniformed Services, nominations to the Service Academies, or nominations of Foreign Service officers.

Submitted February 7

Carey Cavanaugh, of Florida, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Counselor, for the rank of Ambassador during his tenure of service as Special Negotiator for Nagorno-Karabakh and New Independent States Regional Conflicts.

Rust Macpherson Deming,
of Maryland, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Republic of Tunisia.

John W. Limbert,
of Vermont, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Islamic Republic of Mauritania.

Roger A. Meece,
of Washington, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Malawi.

Ronald E. Neumann,
of Virginia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the State of Bahrain.

Submitted February 9

John Antoon II,
of Florida, to be U.S. District Judge for the Middle District of Florida, vice G. Kendall Sharp, retired.

Robert J. Cindrich,
of Pennsylvania, to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the Third Circuit, vice Timothy K. Lewis, retired.

John R. Dinger,
of Florida, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Mongolia.

Audrey G. Fleissig,
of Missouri, to be U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Missouri for the term of 4 years, vice Edward L. Dowd, Jr., resigned.

Phyllis J. Hamilton,
of California, to be U.S. District Judge for the Northern District of California, vice an additional position in accordance with 28 U.S.C. 133(b)(1).

Douglas Alan Hartwick,
of Washington, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Lao People's Democratic Republic.

Christopher Robert Hill,
of Rhode Island, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Poland.

Donna Jean Hrinak,
of Virginia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Venezuela.

Kent R. Markus,
of Ohio, to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the Sixth Circuit, vice David A. Nelson, retired.

Danny Lee McDonald,
of Oklahoma, to be a member of the Federal Election Commission for a term expiring April 30, 2005 (reappointment).

Christopher A. McLean,
of Nebraska, to be Administrator, Rural Utilities Service, Department of Agriculture, vice Wally B. Beyer.

John Martin O'Keefe,
of Virginia, a career member of the the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United State of America to the Kyrgyz Republic.

Mary Ann Peters,
of California, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and

Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the People's Republic of Bangladesh.

Marc Racicot,
of Montana, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for National and Community Service for a term expiring October 6, 2004, vice Reatha Clark King, resigned.

Bradley A. Smith,
of Ohio, to be a member of the Federal Election Commission for a term expiring April 30, 2005, vice Lee Ann Elliott, resigned.

Alan D. Solomont,
of Massachusetts, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for National and Community Service for a term expiring October 6, 2004, vice Carol W. Kinsley, term expired.

Submitted February 10

Edward William Gnehm, Jr.,
of Georgia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of career minister, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Australia.

Ronald D. Godard,
of Texas, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Co-operative Republic of Guyana.

Daniel A. Johnson,
of Florida, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Suriname.

V. Manuel Rocha,
of California, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Bolivia.

Michael J. Senko,
of the District of Columbia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Coun-

selor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and to serve concurrently and without additional compensation as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Kiribati.

Checklist of White House Press Releases

The following list contains releases of the Office of the Press Secretary that are neither printed as items nor covered by entries in the Digest of Other White House Announcements.

Released February 7

Transcript of a press briefing by National Economic Council Director Gene Sperling, Council of Economic Advisers Chairman Martin Baily, Treasury Secretary Larry Summers, Office of Management and Budget Director Jack Lew on the fiscal year 2001 budget

Released February 8

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Released February 9

Announcement of nominations for the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit, U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Florida, and U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California

Released February 10

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Transcript of a press briefing by Council of Economic Advisers Chairman Martin Baily on the President's Economic Report

Fact sheet: Embassy Security Funding

Statement by the Press Secretary on the President's action on the home heating oil situation

Released February 11

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

**Acts Approved
by the President**

NOTE: No acts approved by the President were received by the Office of the Federal Register during the period covered by this issue.